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SHRIMAD RAJCHANDRA



A PICTORIAL BIOGRAPHY

SRIMAD RAJCHANDRA

Shrimad Rajchandra's genius was of a contemplative character, and yet the story of his life is not entirely uneventful. Till he was four years old, he was known as Laxminandan, but that was informally; he was, next, given the name Raichand. He grew up, and was sent to school. He was quick at learning and had remarkable memory and poetic gifts. As a young man, he got married, shifted to Bombay and entered business, where again he was strikingly successful. He led the life of a house-holder; he had four children. After having retired from business; at an early stage, he left Bombay and returned to places nearer his hometown Vavania in Saurashtra, and he passed away while still in his thirties, at the age of thirty-four.....

Raichandbhai was considerably close to people of the Jain fold who follow the way as preached by Bhagwan Mahavir. Quite a number of these were orthodox Jains, and among these were some who were munis, who were criticized in the orthodox circles and sometime to hostility and persecution. Very often, Shrimad was approached for guidance by his disciples during periods of strain. Despite this, Shrimad's advice was to avoid all unnecessary wranglings and friction, but never to flinch from the main battle.

It was this independence of outlook and this capacity for the analysis of the accepted values of life, that attracted a young intellectual like Mohandas Gandhi to him and there were exchange of letters between Gandhiji and Shrimad, which left a deep impact on Gandhiji. This was also how the ardent but unassuming young man from Vavania, entered the history of Indian and consequently, of world-thought.

What follows is the pictorial life-story of this man.

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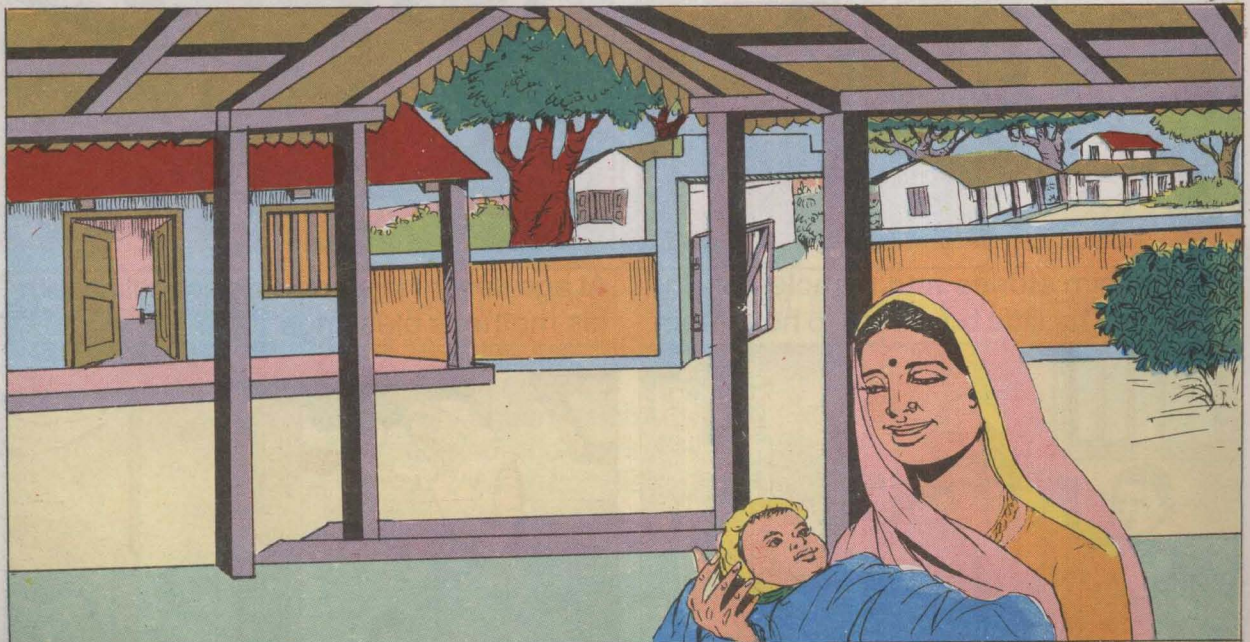
SRIMAD RAJCHANDRA ASHRAM-AGAS (GUJRAT)

DIWAKAR PRAKASHAN

A-7, AWAGARH HOUSE, OPP. ANJNA CINEMA, M.G. ROAD, AGRA-282 002. PH. : 351165, 5178

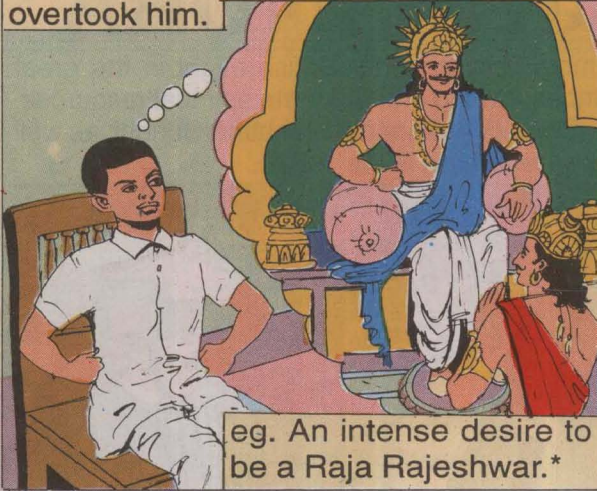
SHRIMAD RAJCHANDRA

India was crushed politically, economically, and morally by superior British might in the great uprising of 1857. The next decade, however, saw India drawing on her innate spiritual resources. Luminaries such as Shri Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekanand, Mahatma Gandhi, as well as a great spiritual personality Shrimad Rajchandra were all born in the 1860's.



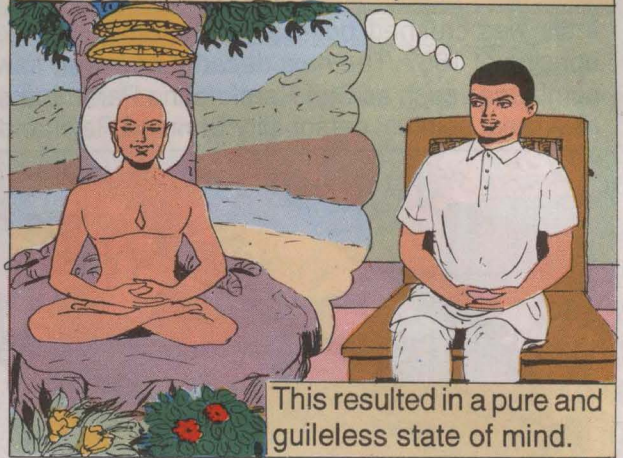
In Vavania, a small village in Saurashtra, 20 miles from Morbi, there lived a pious couple. Ravjibhai, a Vaishnava, and Devabai, a Jain. On the 11th of November 1867, a son was born to them called Raichand (Rajchandra). He had four sisters and a younger brother Mansukh.

In his childhood strange imaginations overtook him.



eg. An intense desire to be a Raja Rajeshwar.*

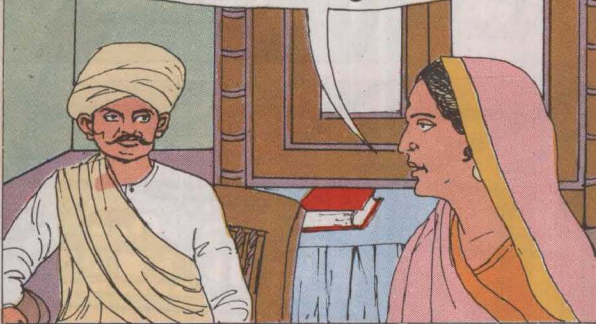
Paradoxically, an equally great desire to be a great saint was also present.



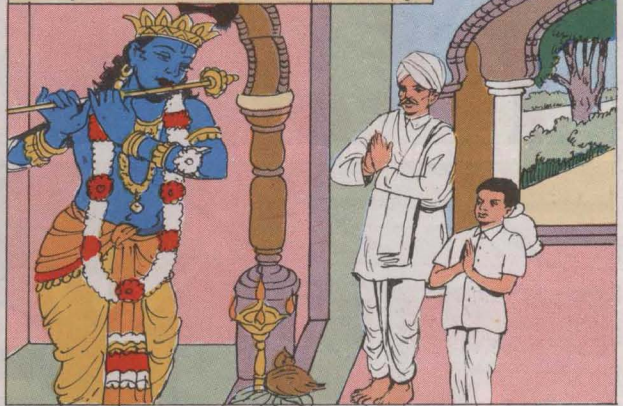
This resulted in a pure and guileless state of mind.

He had no material desires.

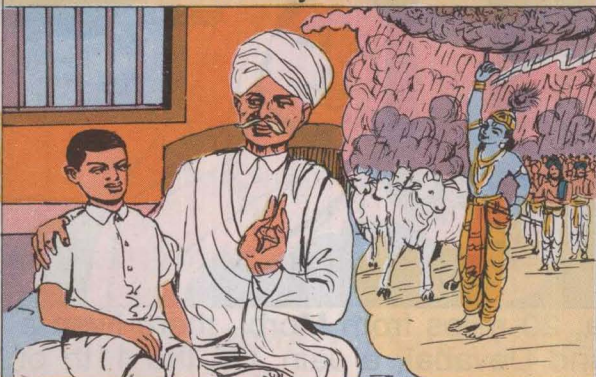
Our Raichand doesn't care about what he eats, drinks or wears. He is full of vairagya** at such a tender age.



He was very fond of his grandfather Shri Panchanbhai who took him to the temple of Shri Krishna daily.

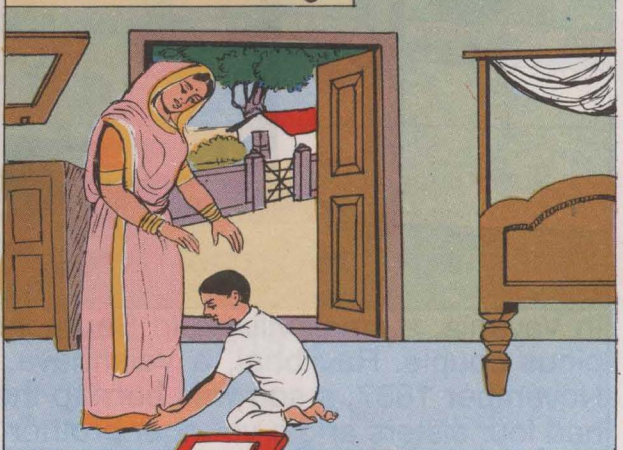


He told him stories and miracles of Shri Krishna. The little boy loved to hear them.



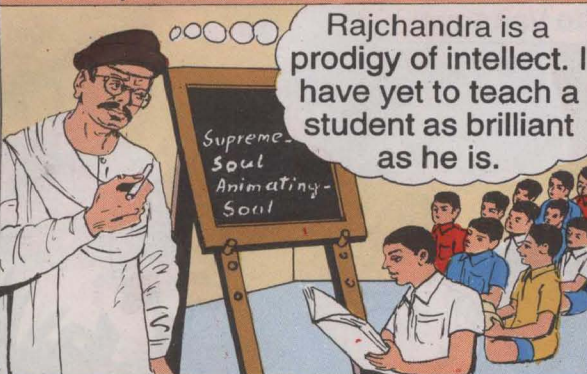
Shri Panchanbhai instilled in him the love of religious values.

At age seven he started his schooling with his mother's blessings.



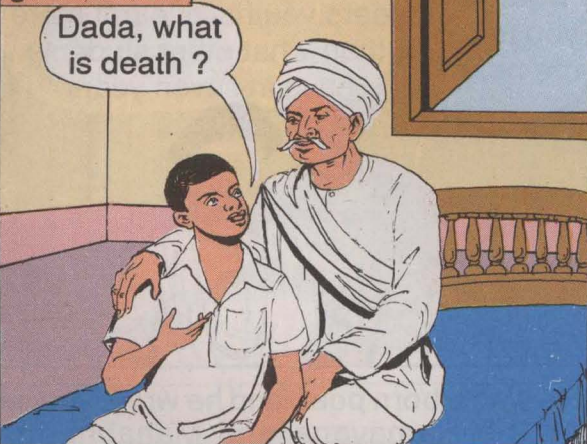
* King of kings ** Non-attachment to worldly desires

He had only to read a lesson once to grasp it and repeat it exactly word by word.



Later, he taught his teacher the deeper meaning of the same texts.

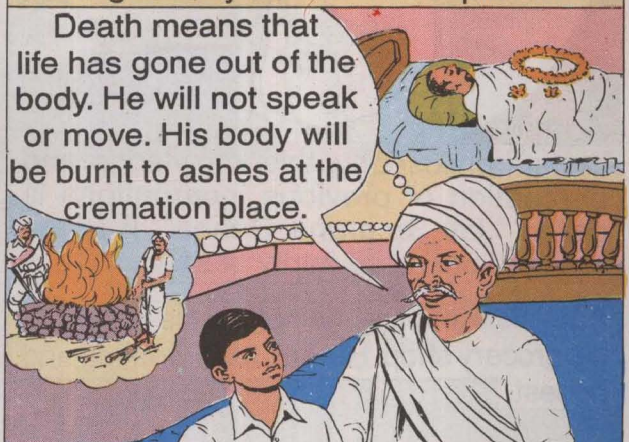
On hearing this, he turned to his beloved grandfather.



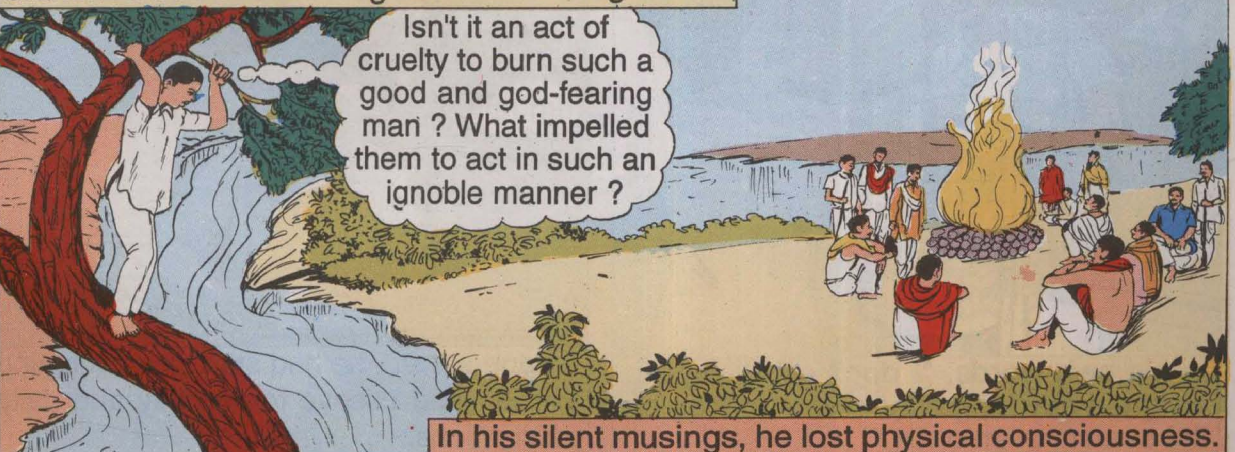
Once, when he was seven, a gentleman named Amichand who loved Shrimad Rajchandra very much died of snake bite.



At first, he was reluctant for fear of scaring the boy. But then he explained :

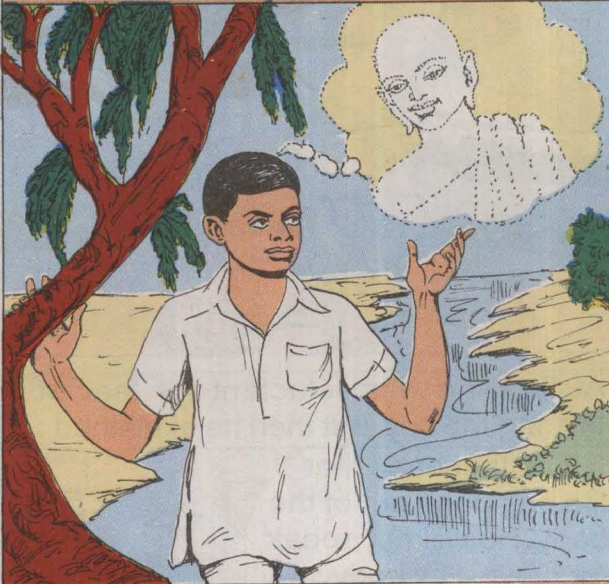


Restless and unsatisfied with the reply, he set out secretly and climbed a two branched tree overlooking the cremation ground.



In his silent musings, he lost physical consciousness.

In that motionless state, he acquired knowledge of his previous births. At a later stage, at the sight of Junagadh fort, this knowledge was expanded till he remembered nine hundred previous incarnations.



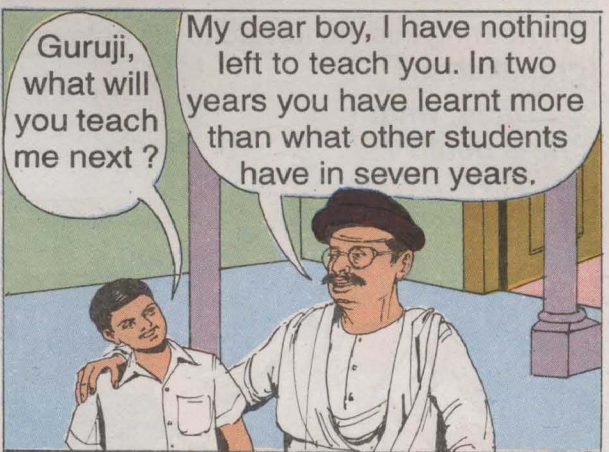
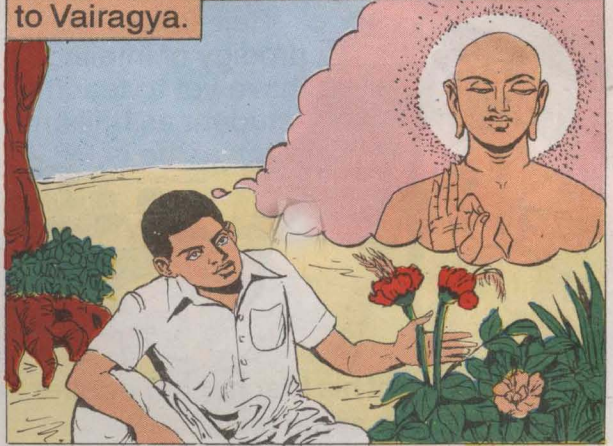
In Jain philosophy, this knowledge and perception of previous incarnations is called "Jati Smarana Gnana". It is the result of unsullied purity of soul.

After his schooling, he helped his father run his grocery shop. He was hard working and honest.



In his own words, "I don't recall having weighed anything either more or less on the scales, even once."

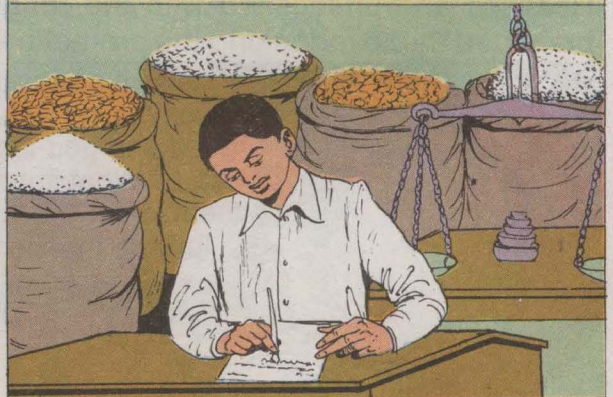
This extraordinary and rare event made him more serene and even more inclined to Vairagya.



Guruji, what will you teach me next ?

My dear boy, I have nothing left to teach you. In two years you have learnt more than what other students have in seven years.

He was a born poet, and he wrote verses on the Ramayana and Mahabharata when there was no customer to wait on.

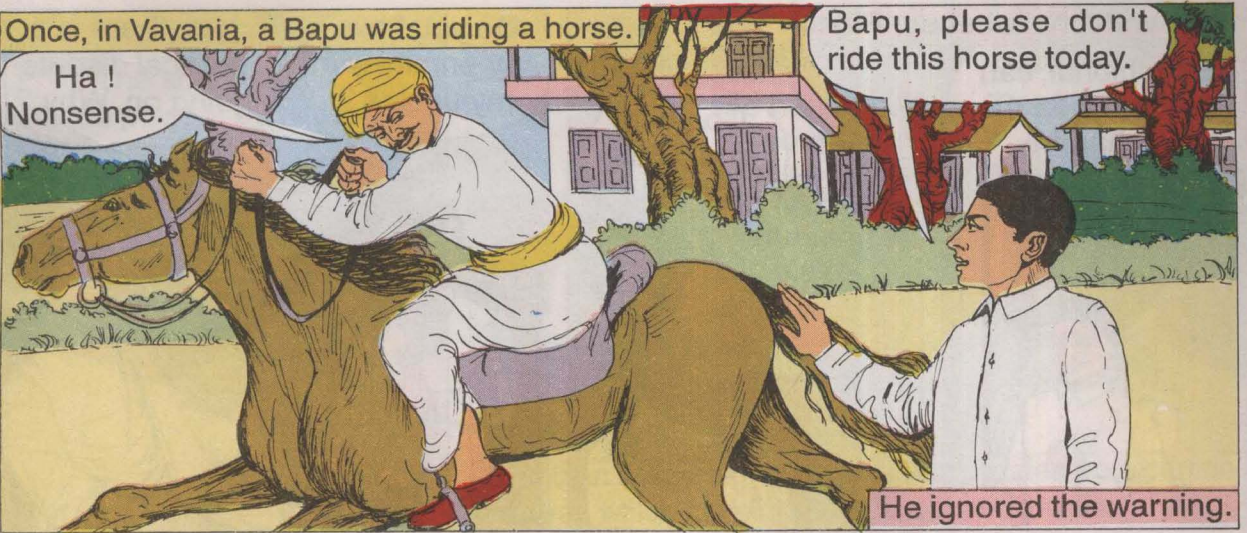


By age eleven, he had started contributing articles and essays to monthly and daily publications.

Once, in Vavania, a Bapu was riding a horse.

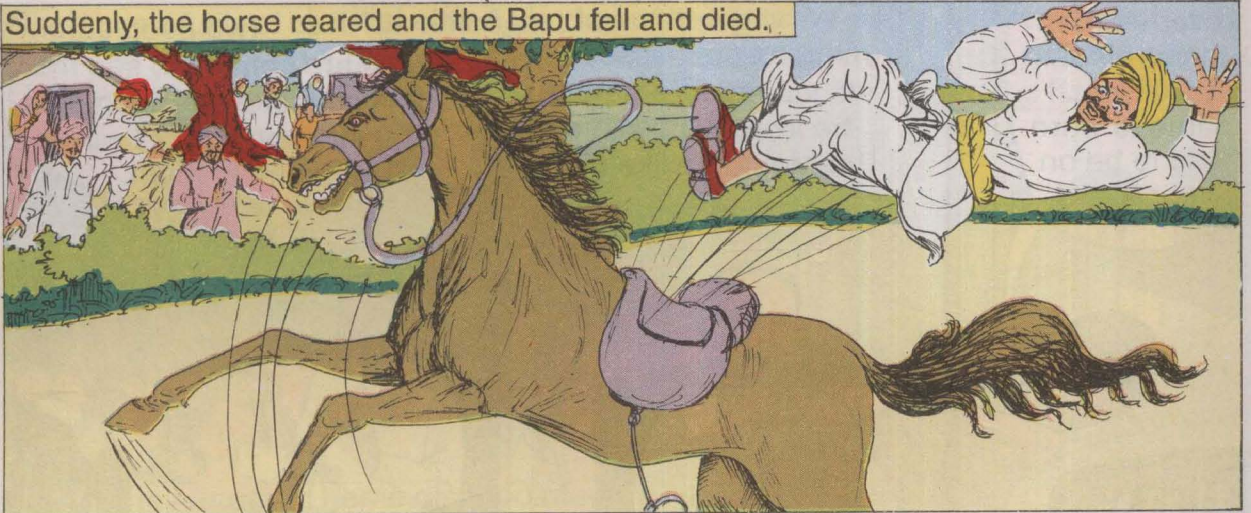
Ha !
Nonsense.

Bapu, please don't
ride this horse today.



He ignored the warning.

Suddenly, the horse reared and the Bapu fell and died.

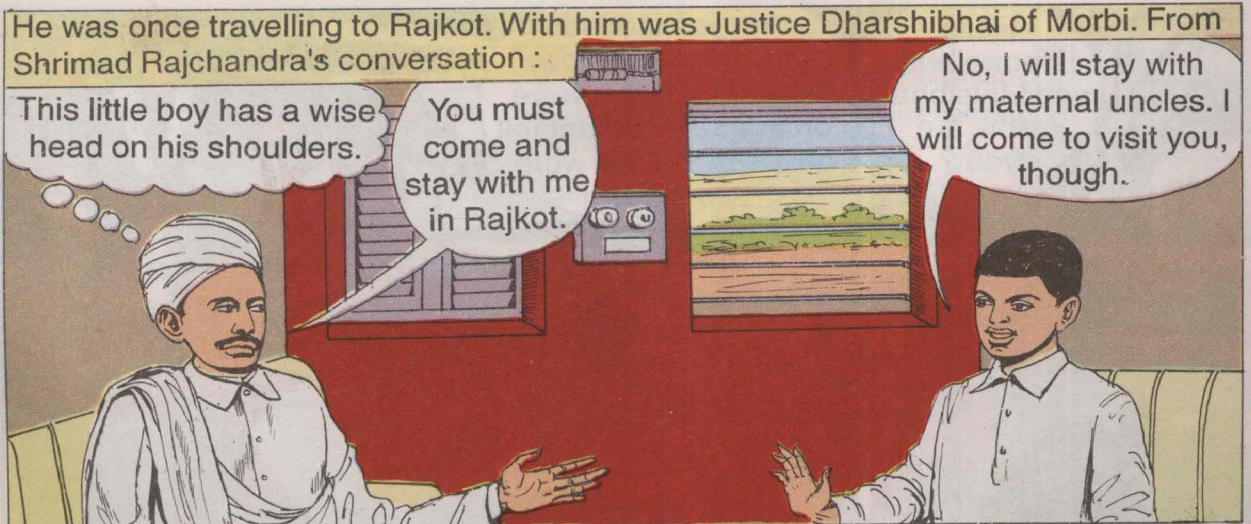


He was once travelling to Rajkot. With him was Justice Dharshibhai of Morbi. From Shrimad Rajchandra's conversation :

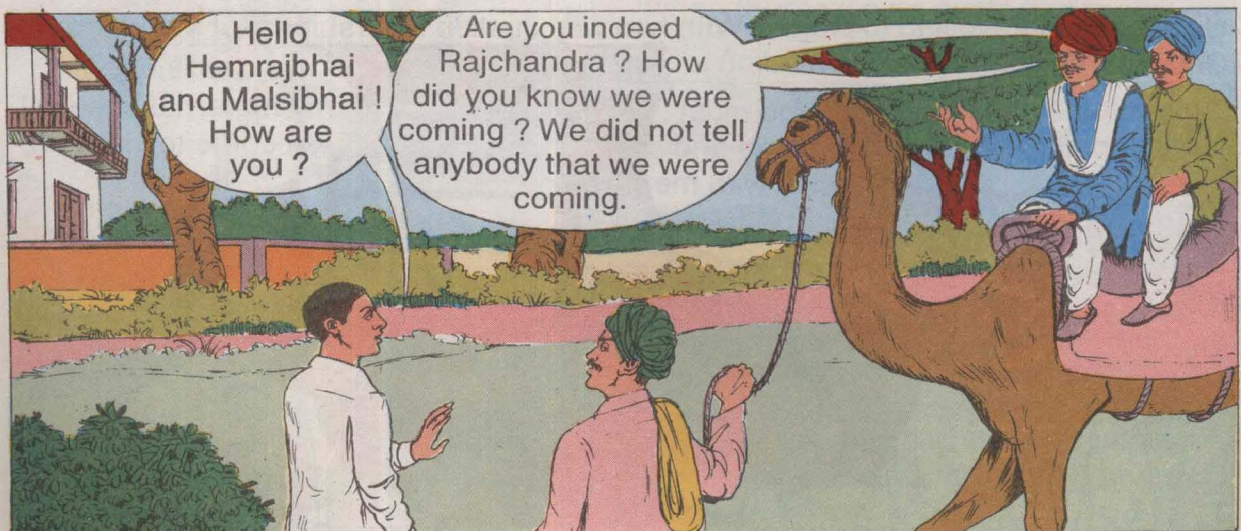
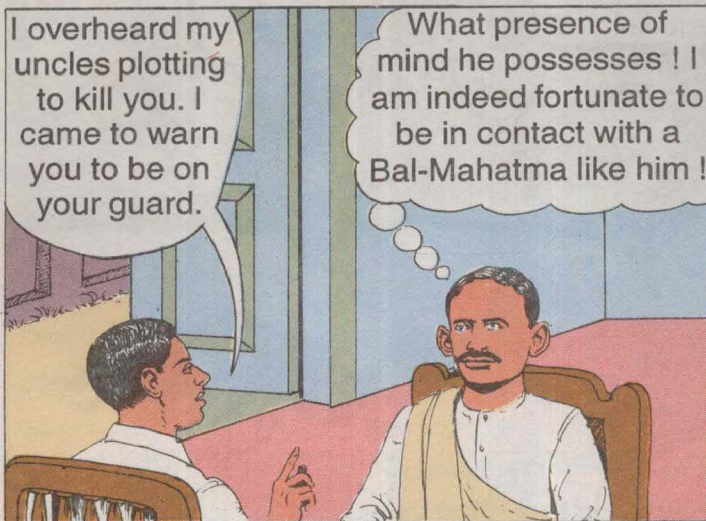
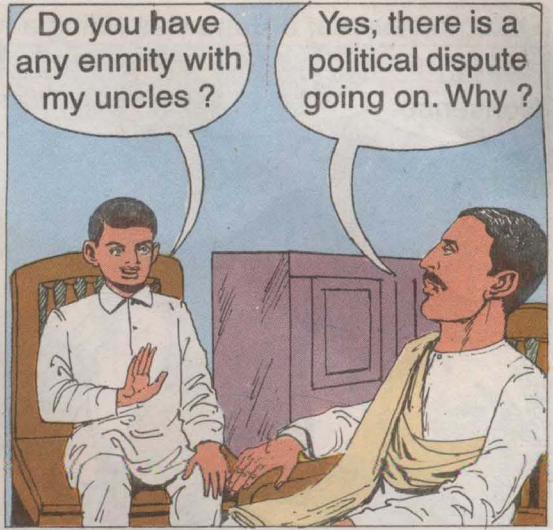
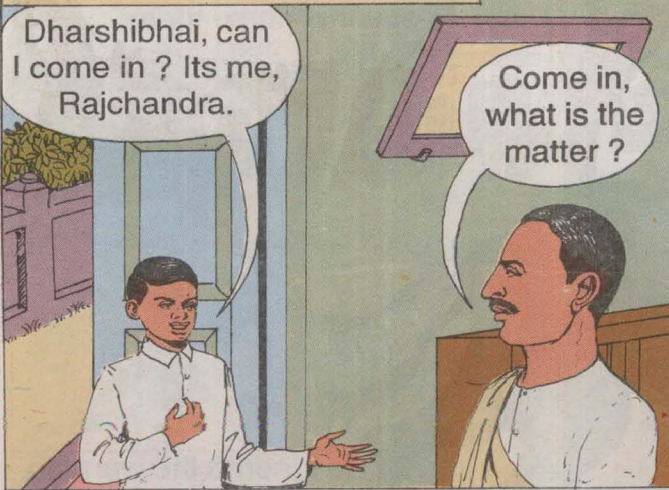
This little boy has a wise
head on his shoulders.

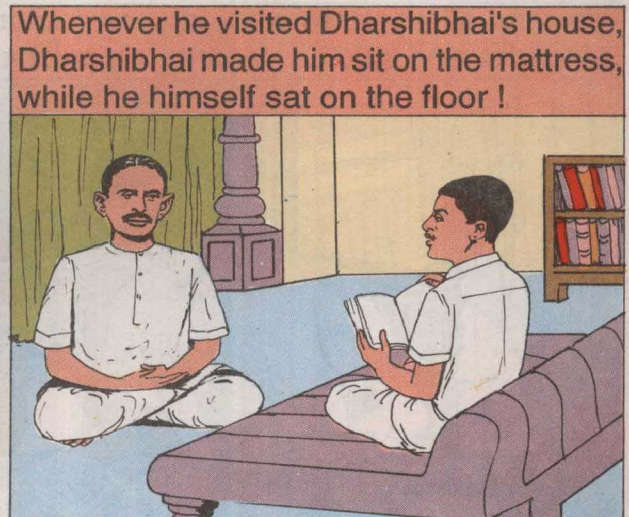
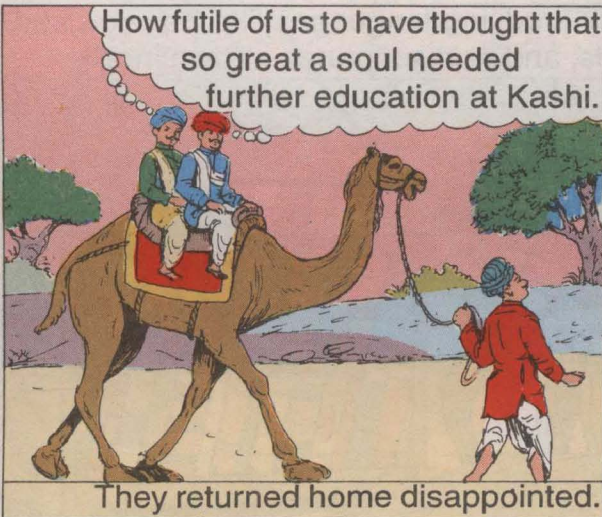
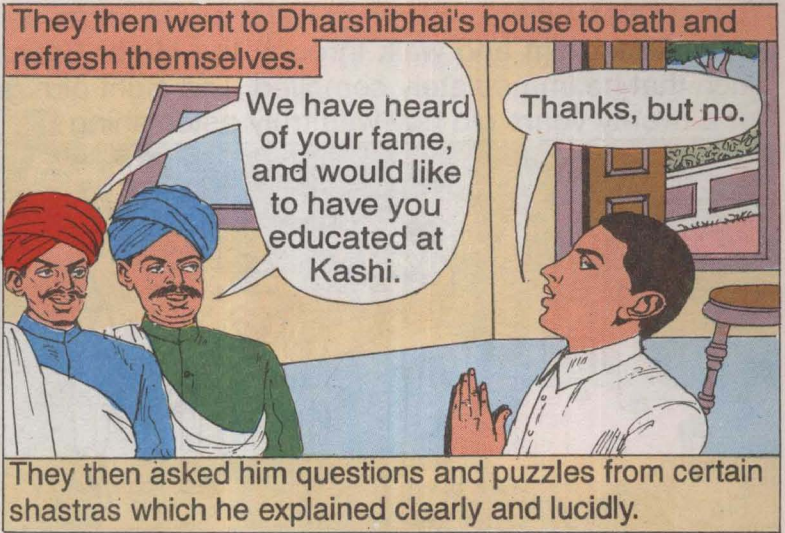
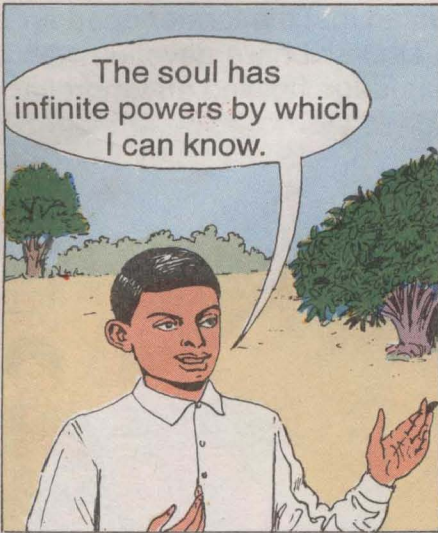
You must
come and
stay with me
in Rajkot.

No, I will stay with
my maternal uncles. I
will come to visit you,
though.

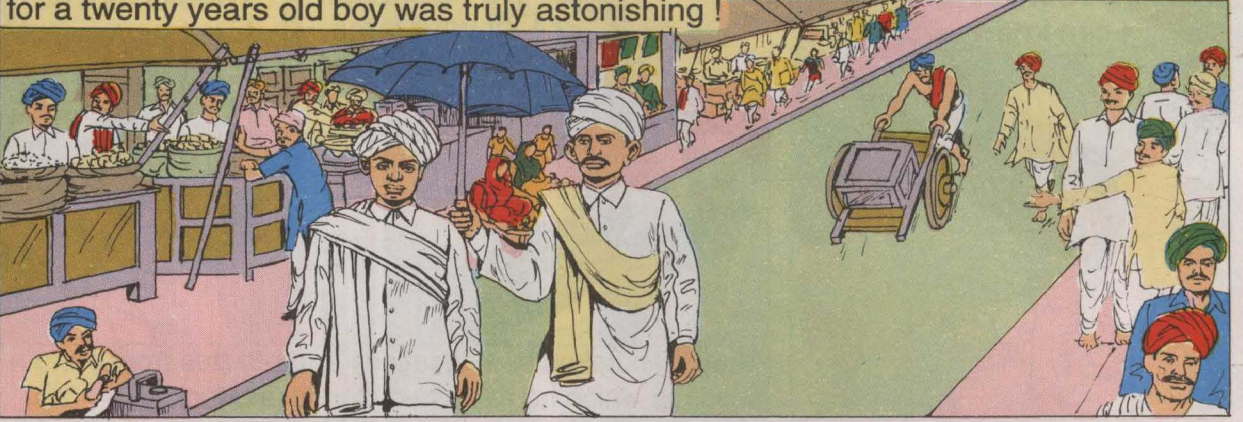


At Dharshibhai's house, Rajkot.

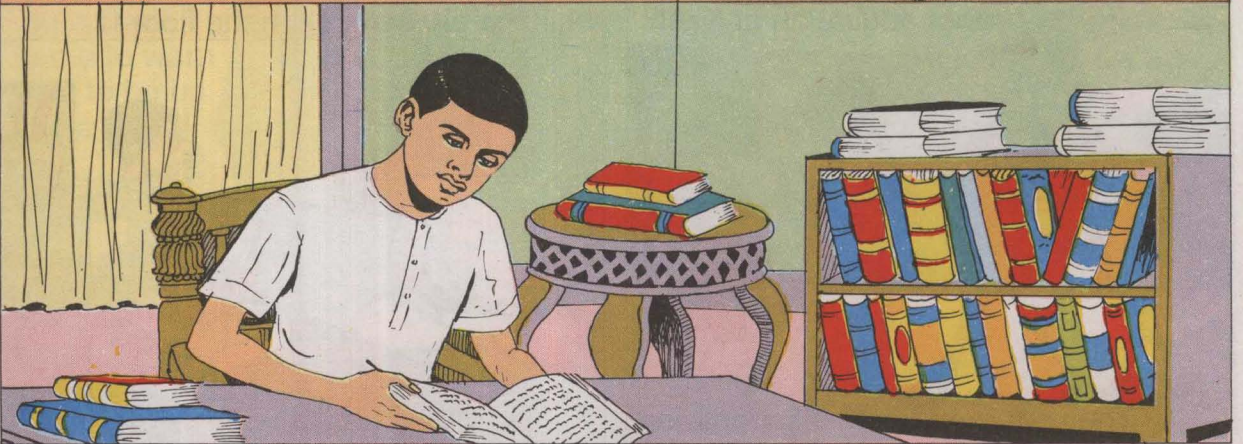




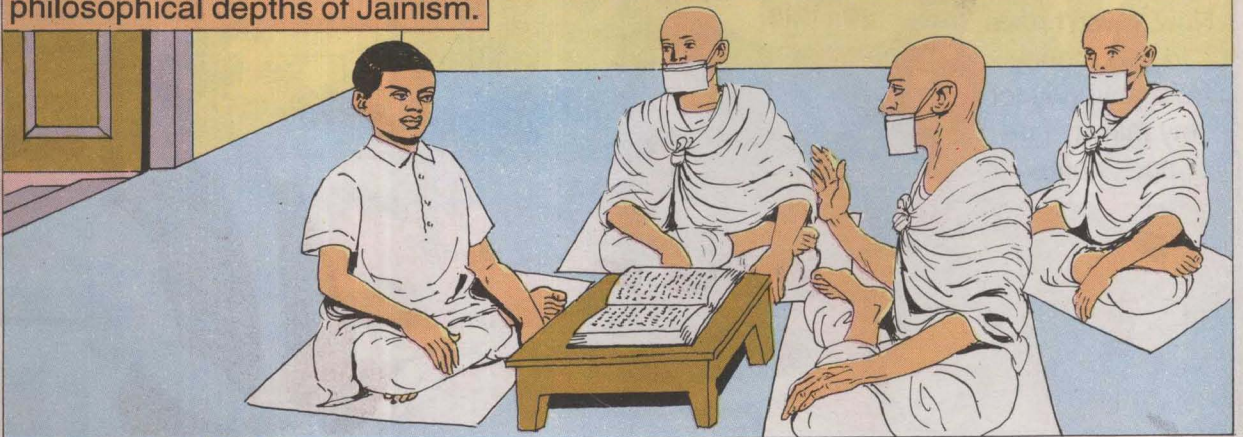
To test Dharshibhai, Shrimad Rajchandra once requested that the former open an umbrella for him and walk through the Morbi Bazaar. Dharshibhai's devotion was such that he immediately complied. The sight of a great judge holding an umbrella for a twenty years old boy was truly astonishing !



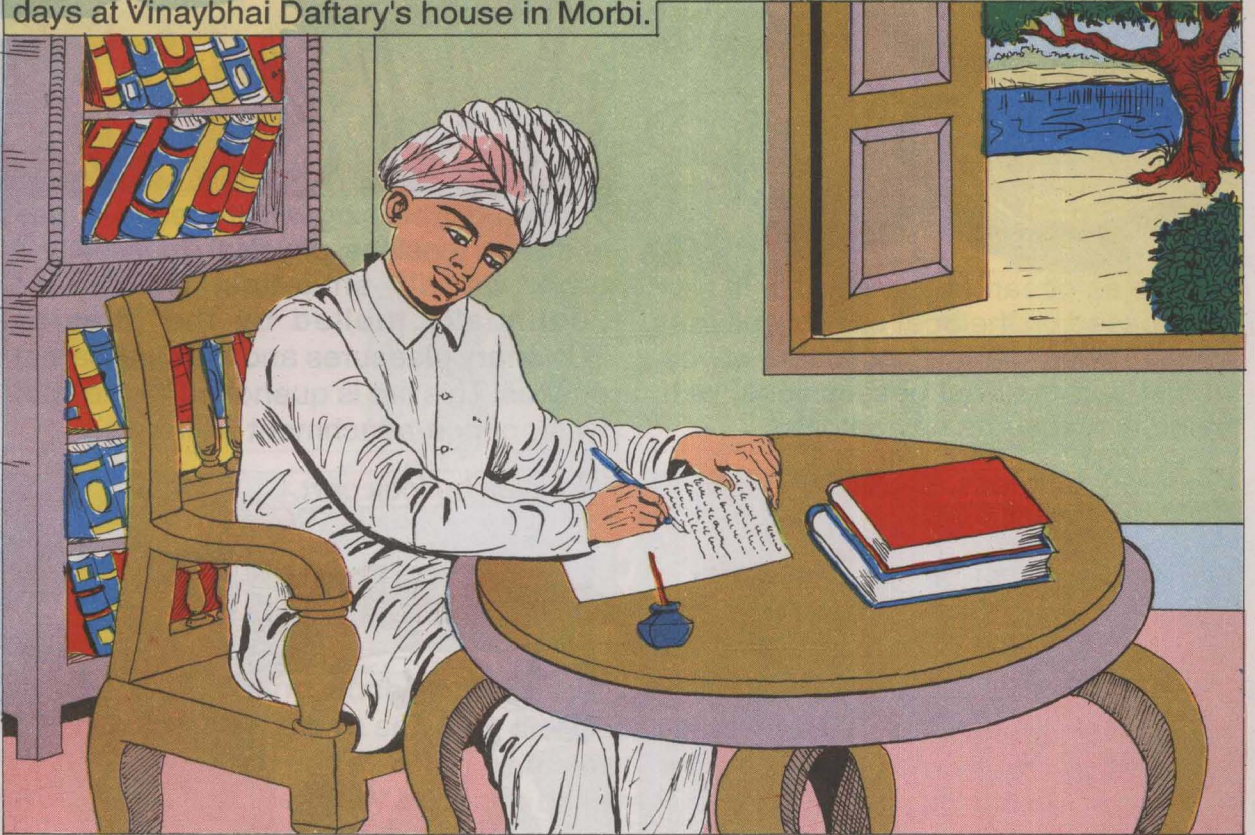
He read all shastras without even formally studying languages like Sanskrit and Magadhi, and studied Vedanta, Upanishads, and Jain scriptures all by himself.



Contact with local Jain monks at the Upashreya (an abode of Jain monks) attracted him greatly. He was deeply influenced by the austerity and the philosophical depths of Jainism.



When he was sixteen, he wrote "Mokshamala". It was a mile-stone in his life. He wrote it in the form of "Balavabodh" or beginner's primer. "Mokshamala" has divine power and inspires the reader to think deeply on "Moksha" (Salvation). It contains the entire Jain philosophy in a nut-shell. He wrote this immortal epic in just three days at Vinaybhai Daftary's house in Morbi.



"Mokshamala" describes the four gatis (life forms), four upamas (metaphors), twelve bhavanas (concepts) etc.

NARAKI	TIRYANCH	MANUSHYA	DEVA
Creatures from hell	Animals	Humans	Deities

Four upamas (metaphors) of the sansar (world).

World as ocean.



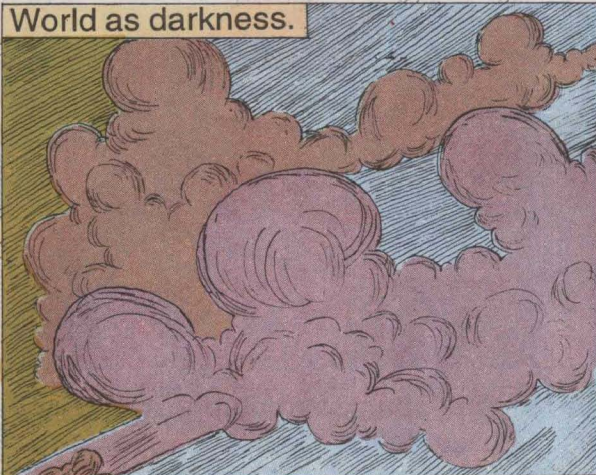
Infinite as ocean of the world is, it can be crossed on the boat of right spiritual conduct, conquering formidable waves of lust and material possessions, with spiritual master as navigator.

World as fire.



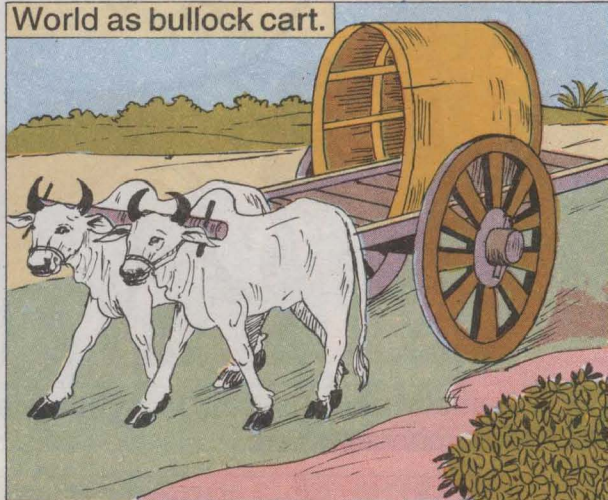
The world is burning with threefold flames of mental tensions, physical illnesses and other worldly anxieties. This fire is continually fuelled by the ghee of illusionary pleasures and the oil of carnal desires. This fire is quenched by the cool water of non-attachment (*vairagya*).

World as darkness.



The world is full of illusion, and as a result, this darkness of ignorance prevails. This darkness is dispelled by the eternal flame of right spiritual knowledge.

World as bullock cart.



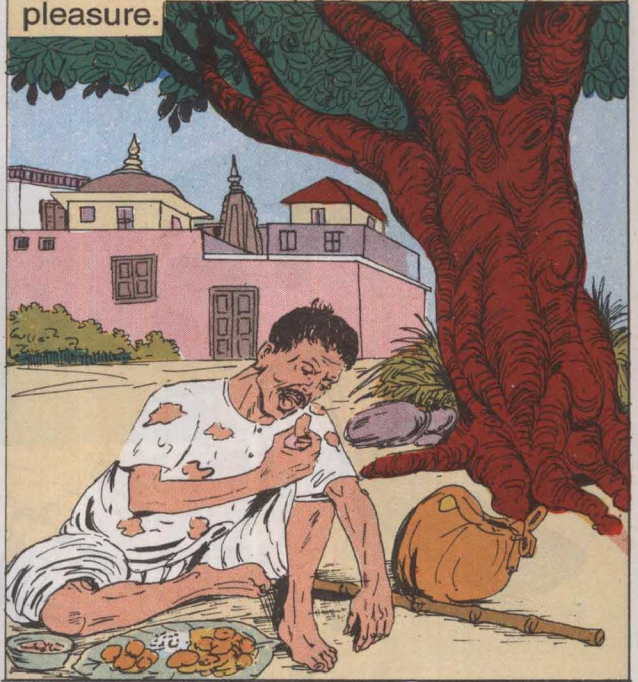
The wheels of the bullock cart represent the eternal cycle of life and death, drawn by the bullocks of attachment, hatred and ignorance.

The twelve *Bhavanas* (reflections) are *Anitya bhavana* (impermanence), *Asharana bhavana* (refugeless state), *Sansara bhavana* (futility of worldliness), *Ekatva bhavana* (of a solitary status), *Anyatva bhavana* (otherness), *Asrava bhavana* (inflow of karmas), *Samvara bhavana* (shutting out of karmas), *Nirjara bhavana* (wearing down of karmas), *Lokswarupa bhavana* (nature of the world), *Bodhidurlabha bhavana* (rareness of the knowledge of truth) and *Dharmadurlabha bhavana* (rareness of true religion). These *bhavanas* are explained by parables and poems. Illustrated here is an example of *Anitya bhavana*.

A poor beggar came to a house on the outskirts of a forest. The compassionate housewife responded to his earnest pleas for some food & gave him left over sweetmeat.



Pleased at obtaining such delicious food he sat under a tree, cleared a small area and started eating his meal with great pleasure.



Drowsy after eating such a meal, he fell asleep. He dreamt that he was a Maharajah, sleeping on a soft bed, dressed in silks and jewels. People were bowing to him in reverence and beautiful women were fanning him and pressing his feet. He really began to believe this wonderful dream was a fact.

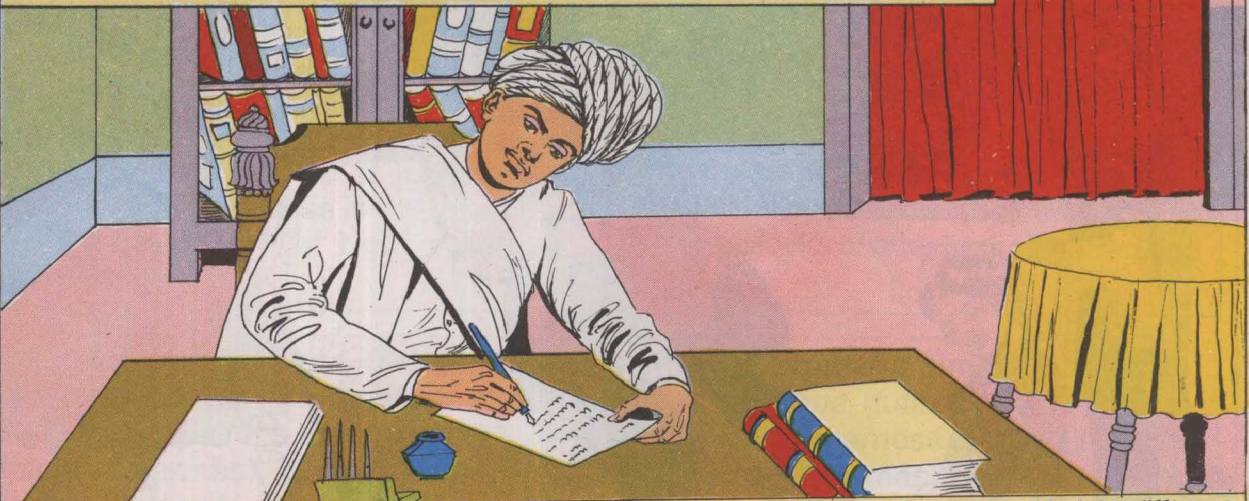


He began actually believing that this dream was real. Suddenly, a burst of thunder and lightning occurred, accompanied by torrential rain. The beggar was rudely awakened. He looked at himself. There was his tattered shirt, his old water vessel and torn mattress.

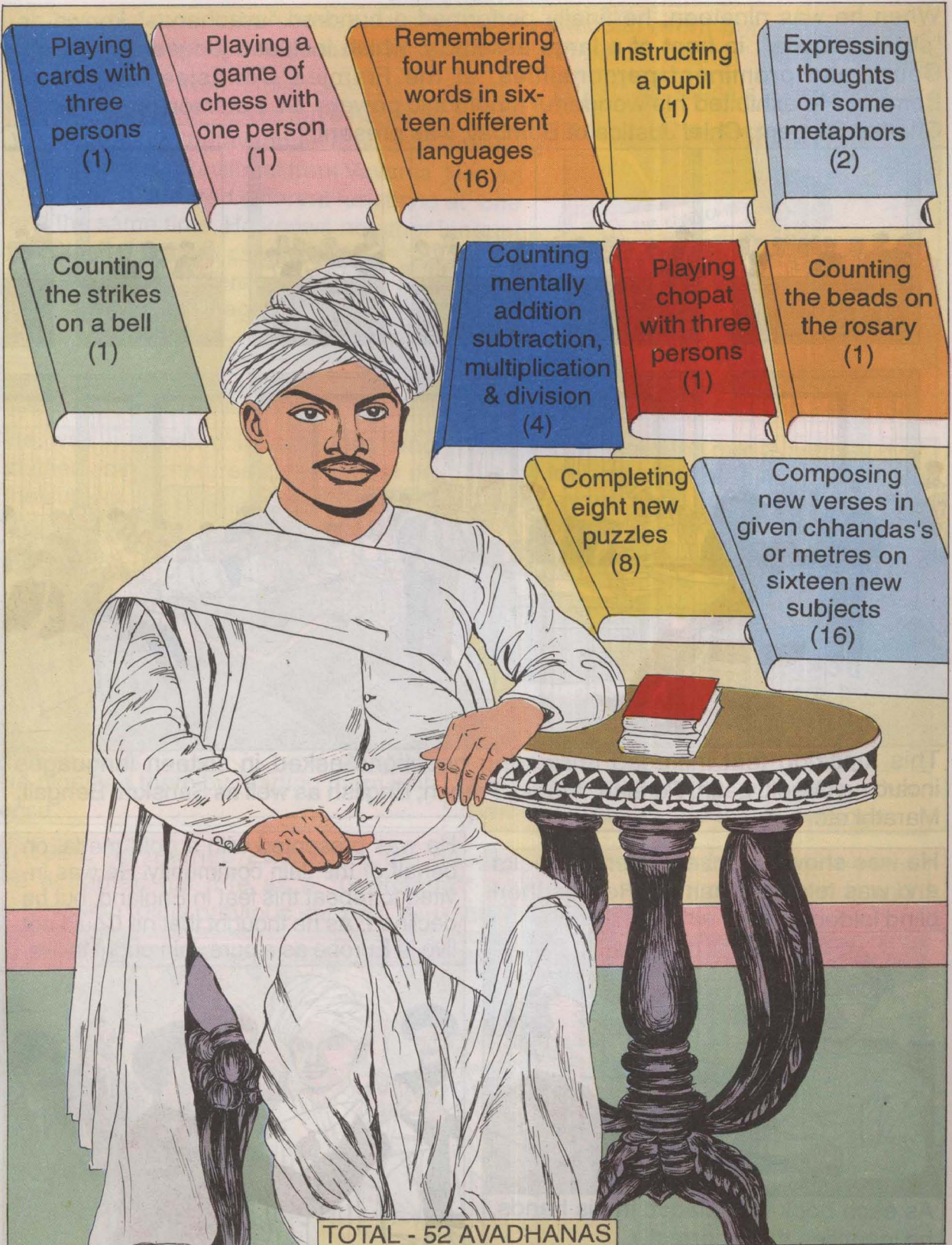


The dream that he thought was real was just—a dream. So also, the worldly pleasures we think we enjoy are merely illusory. "Mokshamala" is full of such parables with chapters on religious rituals samayik, kshama (forgiveness), vivek (discretion), and vairagya (detachment).

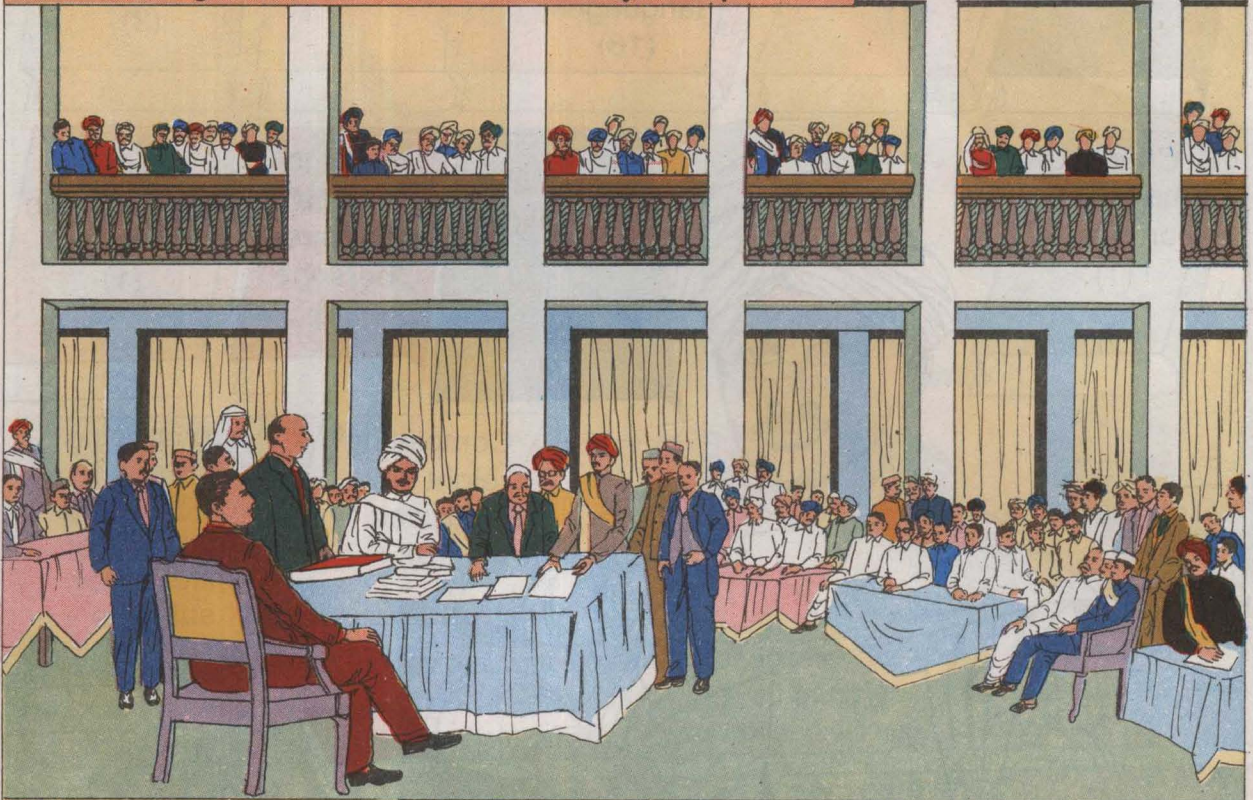
"Mokshamala", written at sixteen, was published a few years later.



By then, he started performing "ashtavadhanas" i.e. the storing up in memory of eight different tasks simultaneously, and reproducing them correctly from memory. He had witnessed Pandit Shankarlal performing "ashtavadhana", and the next day he repeated the feat. He progressed to twelve, sixteen and then fifty-two avadhanas. These are shown on the next page.



When he was nineteen, he finally performed a hundred "avadhanas" known as "shatavadhana", in front of a large assembly, which included judges of the High Court, and prominent personalities, at the Framjee Cowasjee Institute in Bombay. He exhibited his wonderful mnemonic powers. Dr. Peterson presided. Sir Charles Sargent, Chief Justice of Bombay, was present.



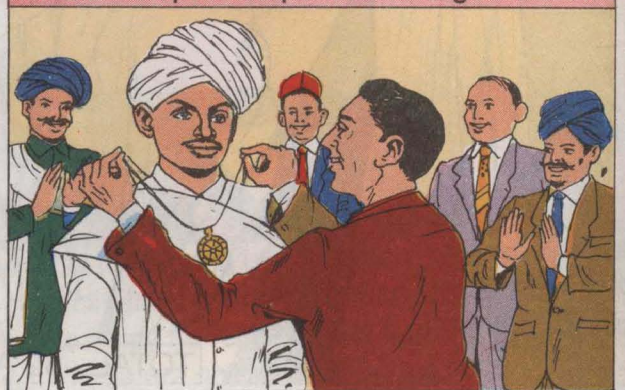
This amazing feat included answering questions asked in sixteen languages including Greek, Latin, Persian, Arabic, French, English as well as Sanskrit, Bengali, Marathi etc.

He was shown a dozen different books and was told their names. He was then blind folded.



As each book was placed in his hands, he identified them correctly.

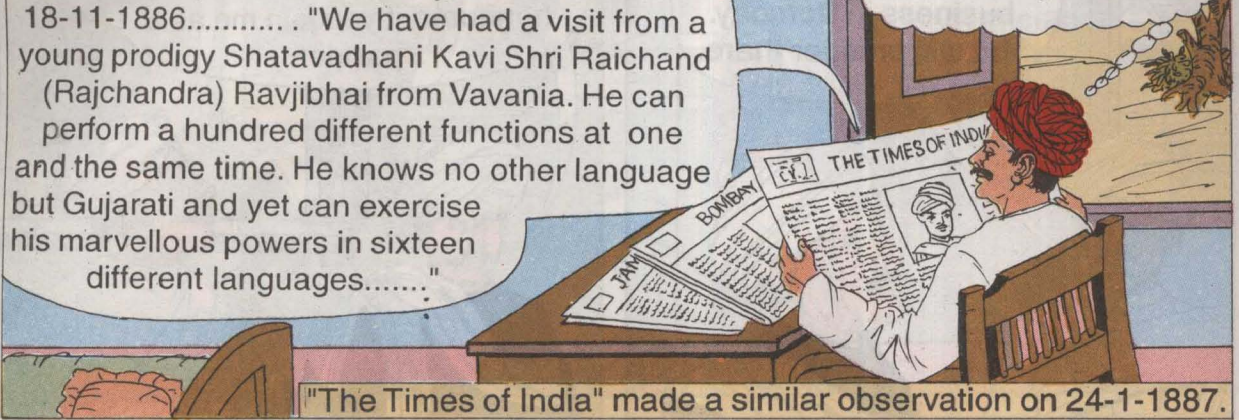
He was presented with a gold medal on behalf of the Jain community. He was invited to repeat this feat in England, but he declined. As he thought that he could not live in Europe as a pure Jain ought to live.



Some of the newspapers which covered this spectacular event were "The Times of India", "Indian Spectator", "Jame Jamshed"*, "Mumbai Samachar".

An excerpt from "Indian Spectator" dated 18-11-1886..... "We have had a visit from a young prodigy Shatavadhani Kavi Shri Raichand (Rajchandra) Ravjibhai from Vavania. He can perform a hundred different functions at one and the same time. He knows no other language but Gujarati and yet can exercise his marvellous powers in sixteen different languages....."

Genius Rajchandra



"The Times of India" made a similar observation on 24-1-1887.

He was interested in astrology and studied Jain scriptures among other on the subject.



He digested them by reading them just once.

He even obtained the rare "Nashta-Vidya" i.e. by looking at the birth chart, he could tell the exact year, month, day and time of the person concerned.



In the whole of India, only one other person (in Kashi) had that knowledge.

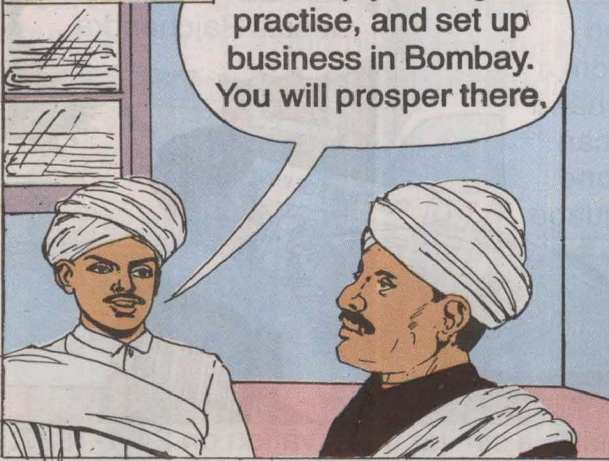
In 1888, he married Zabakben, the daughter of Shri Popatbhai Jagjivandas. He accepted his role as a "Gruhashthi"* with great equanimity of mind, and submission to his previous karmas. Very little is known about his family life.



* house-holder

Her uncle Shri Rewashankarbhai was deep in debt.

Give up your legal practise, and set up business in Bombay. You will prosper there.



It was amazingly accurate prediction.

Rajchandra, my business is flourishing. I would be very honoured if you join me as a partner.



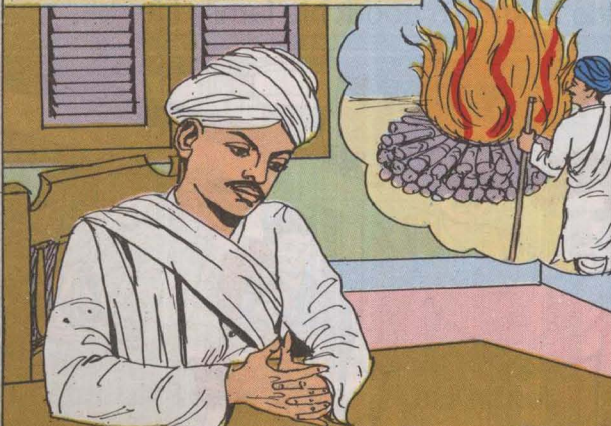
About his own Horoscope, ten renowned astrologers declared unanimously.

It consists of rare, best yogas like Chandrachud, Amar, Shrivasta, Mayur, Parijat, Mrigraj, etc.

These yogas lead the native to perfection and Godhood.

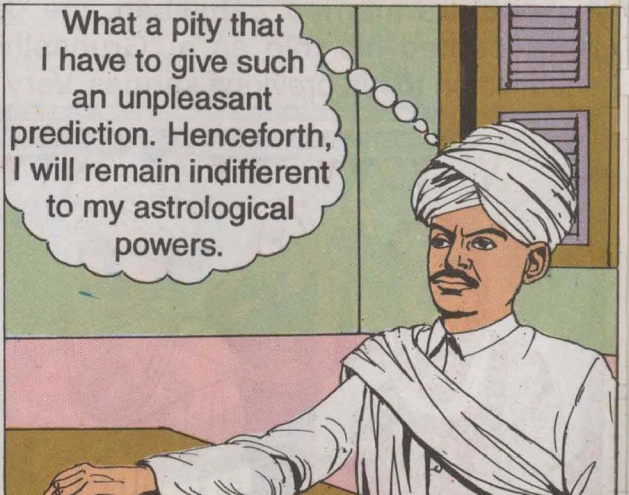


When asked to read the future of a certain sick man in 1891—

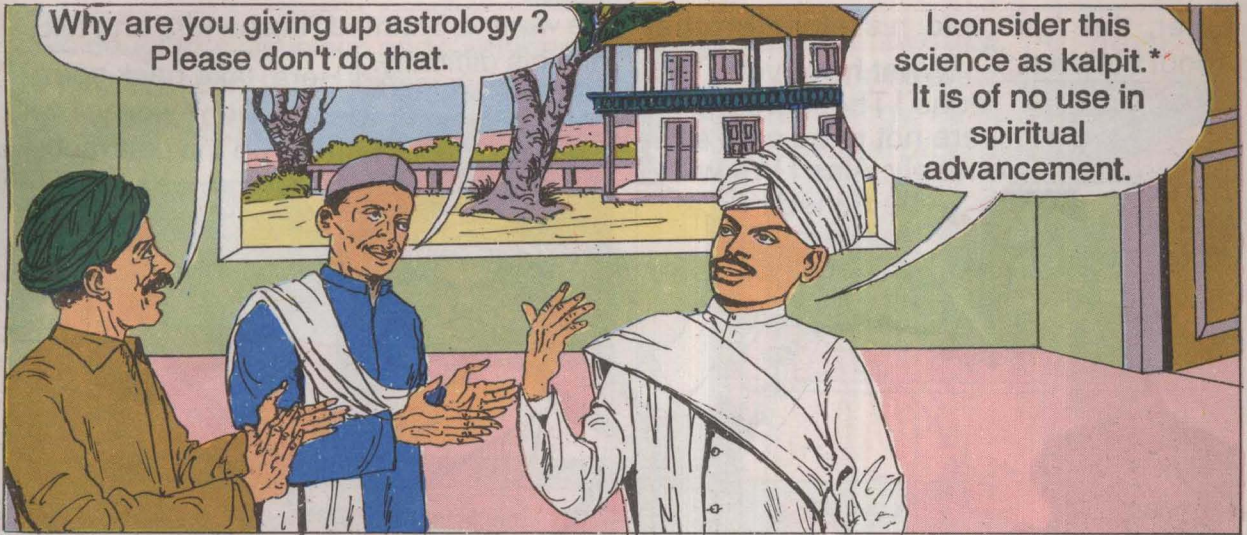


He clearly foresaw his death.

What a pity that I have to give such an unpleasant prediction. Henceforth, I will remain indifferent to my astrological powers.



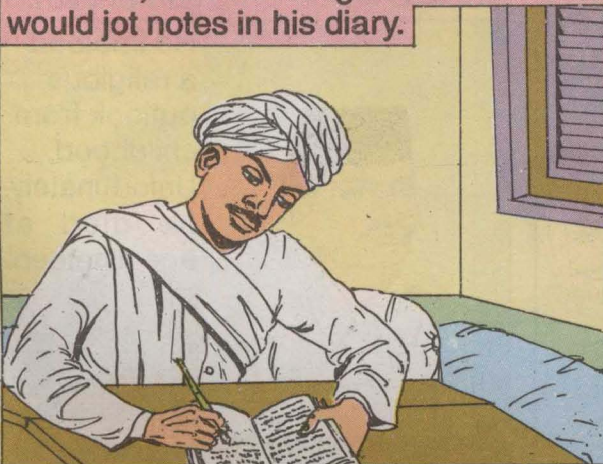
He remained silent and serene.



He joined the diamonds and pearls business in partnership with Shri Rewashankarbhai and Shri Maneklalbhai, in charge of finance and foreign trade. He was scrupulously honest and his partners always benefitted from his fore-sighted advice. Within two years the business expanded to France, England and Arabia.



Whenever he found leisure time from his business, he read religious literature or would jot notes in his diary.



Once, an Arab sold him some pearls at a certain price and the Arab gave him a contract.



Imaginary in the sense that it is of no use in spiritual advancement.

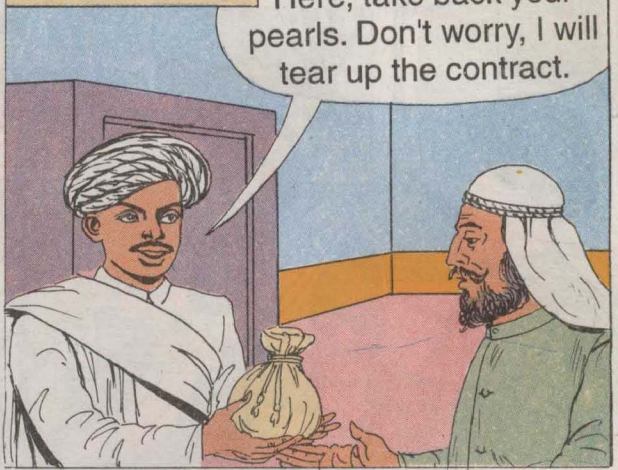
Later, the Arab told his elder brother about the deal.

What have you done ! Those pearls were not to be sold so cheaply. Alas ! We will be ruined !



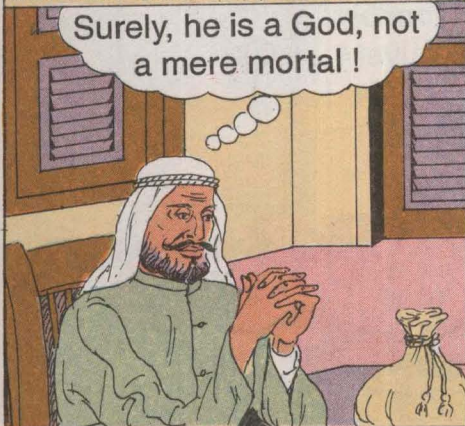
He went to Shrimad Rajchandra and told him his difficulty.

Here, take back your pearls. Don't worry, I will tear up the contract.



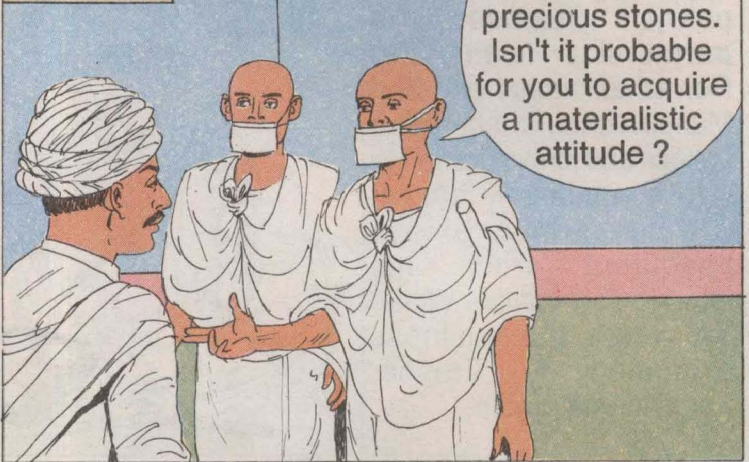
His compassion was such, that he forsook a handsome profit from the business deal !

Surely, he is a God, not a mere mortal !

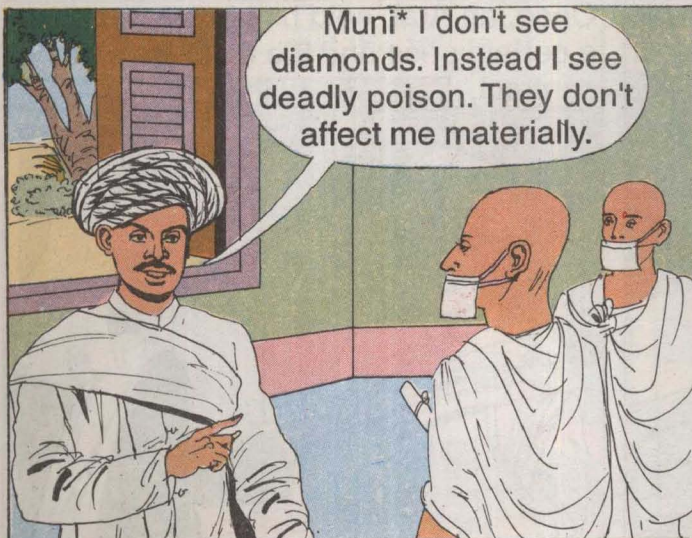


Jain monk Shri Devkaranji once asked him.

You deal in diamonds and precious stones. Isn't it probable for you to acquire a materialistic attitude ?

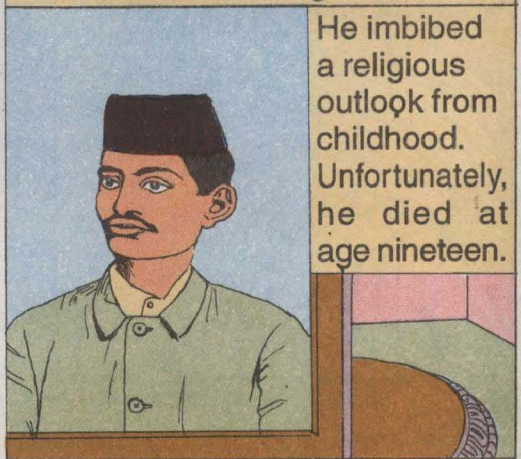


Muni* I don't see diamonds. Instead I see deadly poison. They don't affect me materially.

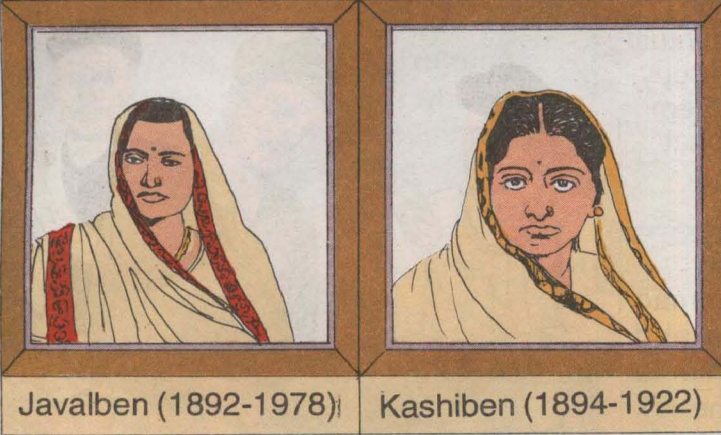


In 1890, a son was born to him. He was called Chhagan Shastri.

He imbibed a religious outlook from childhood. Unfortunately, he died at age nineteen.

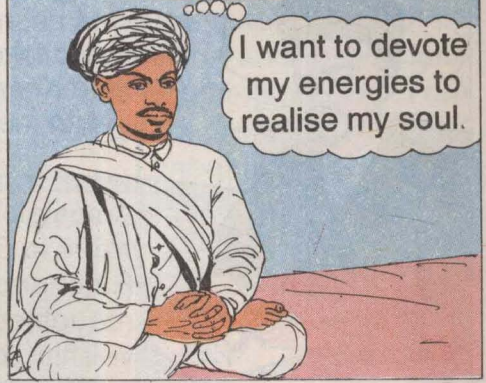


Two daughters, Javalben and Kashiben were born to him. A second son, Ratilal died in infancy.

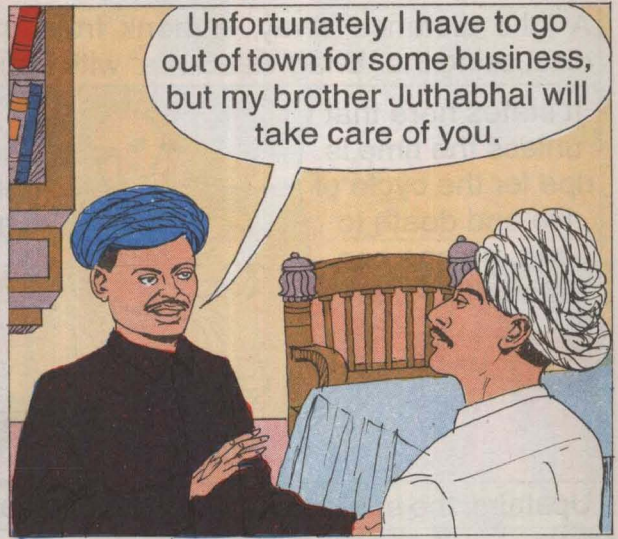


Javalben (1892-1978) Kashiben (1894-1922)

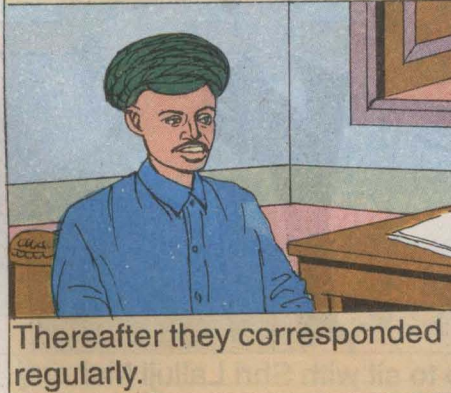
After twenty, he gave up performing avadhanas & practising astrology, as they hindered his spiritual progress.



In 1888, he went to Ahmedabad for the printing of "Mokshamala" Shri Jaisingbhai Ujjamshi rendered help in the matter.

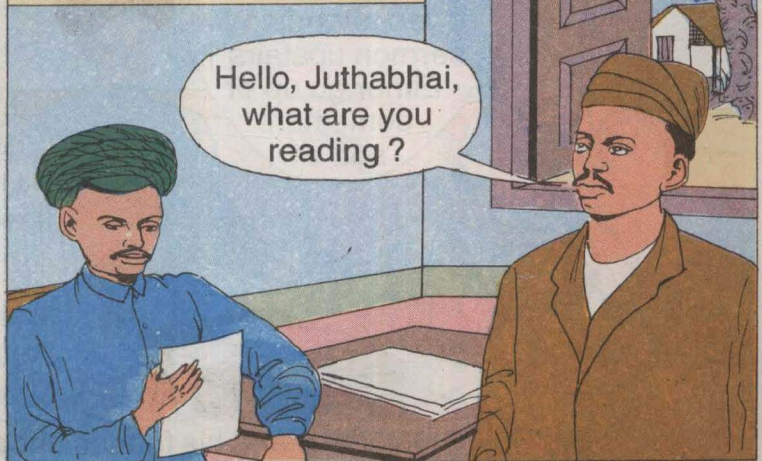


Shri Juthabhai, a pure soul himself, recognised the divinity in Shrimad Rajchandra, and became his ardent devotee.

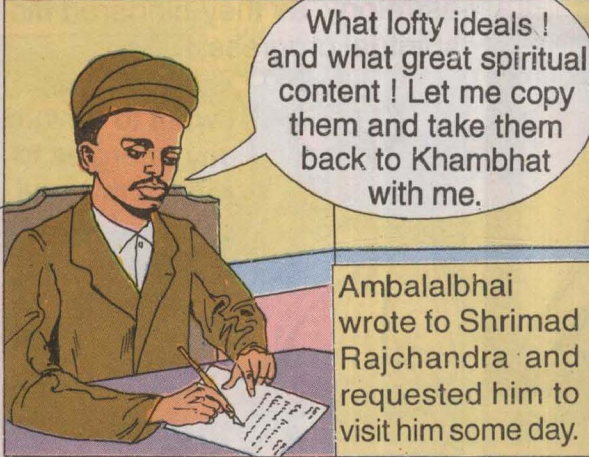


Thereafter they corresponded regularly.

1889, Juthabhai's friend, Shri Ambalabhai came to visit him from Khambhat.



Juthabhai eagerly showed him a few letters from Shrimad Rajchandra.



Ambalalbai wrote to Shrimad Rajchandra and requested him to visit him some day.

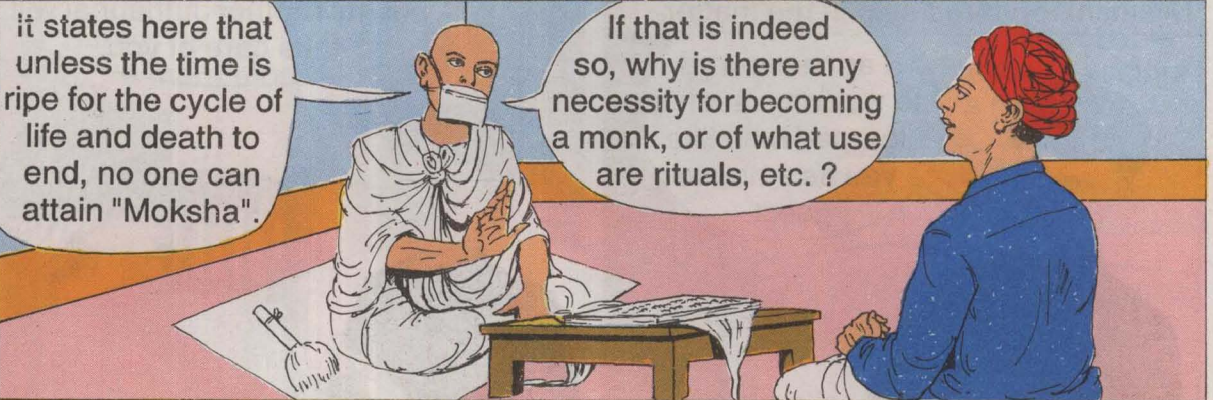
He would sit in the upashreya for hours together, re-reading the letters with his friends.



A little distance away, a monk from the upashreya, Shri Lalluji Maharaj, was discussing the "Bhagwati-Sutra" with Patidar Shri Damodar and expressing a doubt.

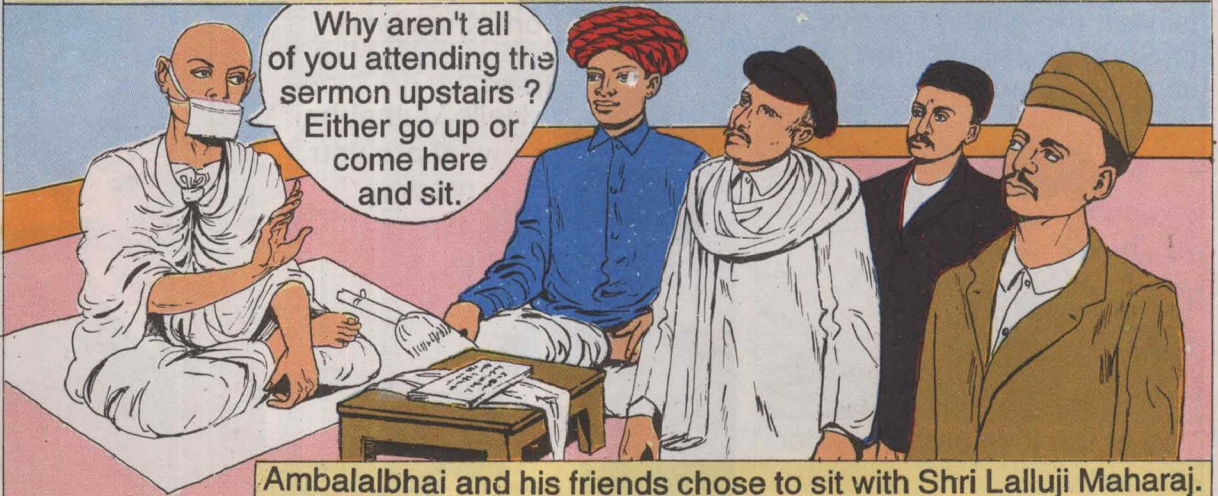
it states here that unless the time is ripe for the cycle of life and death to end, no one can attain "Moksha".

If that is indeed so, why is there any necessity for becoming a monk, or of what use are rituals, etc. ?



Upstairs, the senior monk, Shri Harakchandji was giving a sermon on the same text.

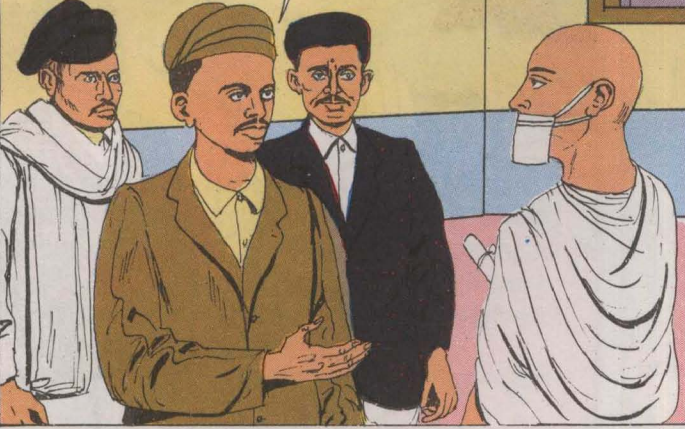
Meanwhile, Shri Lalluji Maharaj saw Ambalalbai and his friends reading the letters.



Ambalalbai and his friends chose to sit with Shri Lalluji Maharaj.

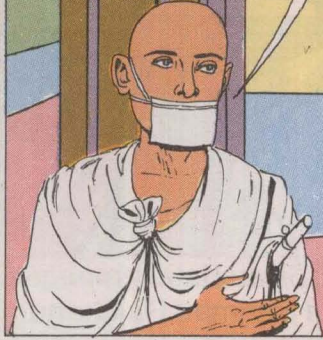
They discussed the above question animatedly, but were unable to come up with a satisfactory answer. Then Ambalalbhai remembered Shrimad Rajchandra.

I know of a very learned person who can answer questions which are far more difficult than this. His name is Shrimad Rajchandra.

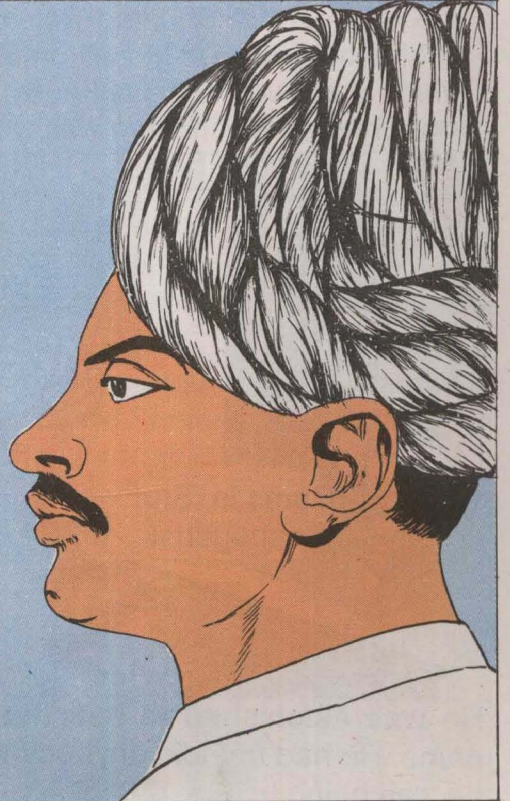


He enthusiastically showed the monk the letters he was reading. When the monk read those letters.

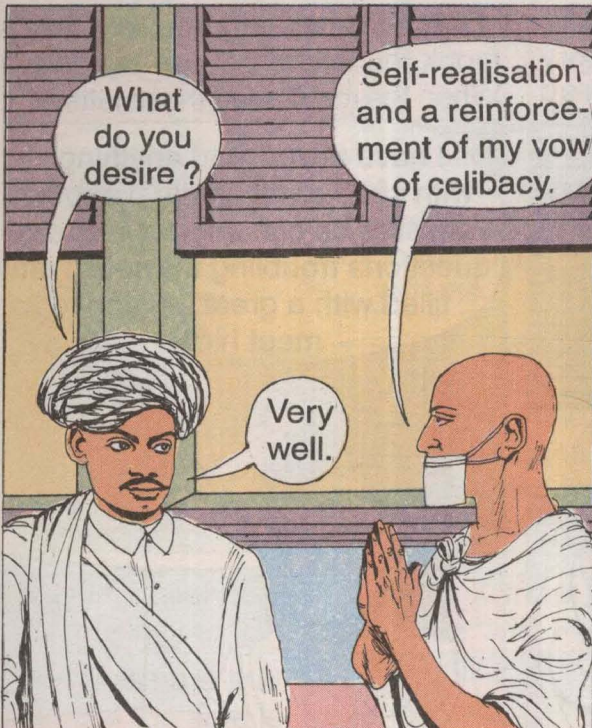
I have never read anything with such great spiritual depth. I am sure he can answer so many questions troubling my soul. I am filled with a great longing to meet him.



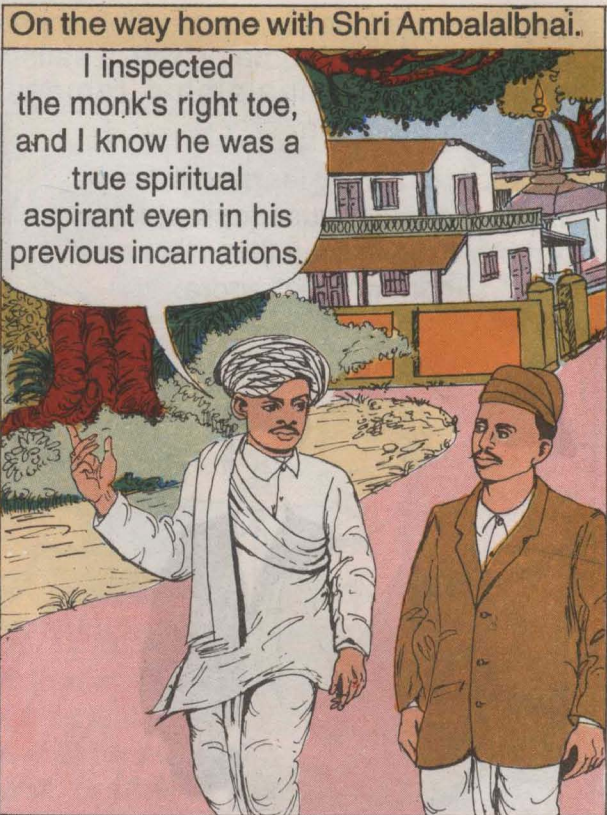
In 1890 Shrimad Rajchandra visited Ambalalbhai in Khambhat. Ambalalbhai took him to the Upashreya. Shri Lalluji Maharaj, more widely, known as Shri Laghuraj Swami sought his senior monk's permission to obtain knowledge from Shrimad Rajchandra. Permission granted, he requested Shrimad Rajchandra to enter the first floor of the Upashreya where he prostrated himself thrice before Shrimad Rajchandra. Though Shrimad Rajchandra askedv him to desist,



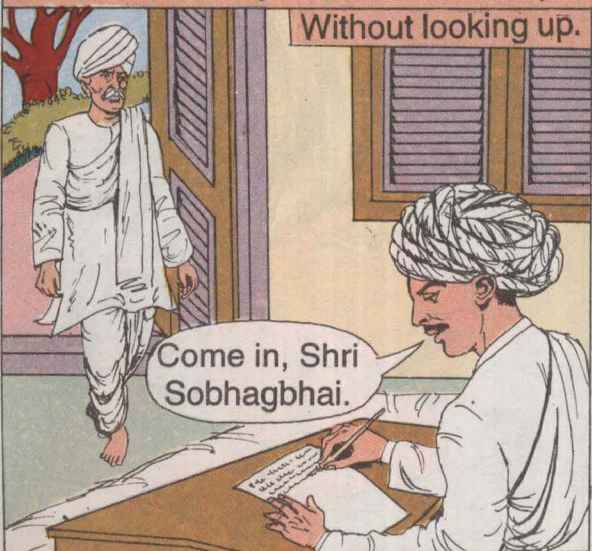
Such was the humility of a true aspirant, who though an older monk, recognised his Guru in a much younger Gruhasthi.



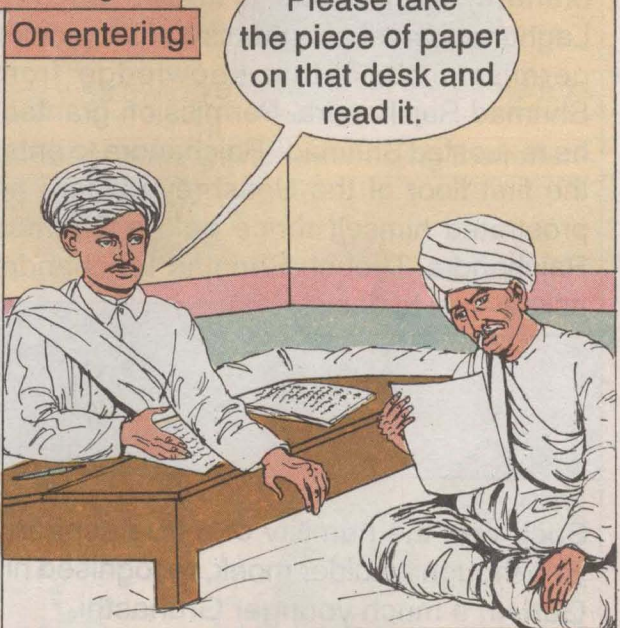
Shri Laghuraj Swami later propagated the preachings of Shrimad Rajchandra.



Having heard of Shrimad Rajchandra's fame as a Shatavadhani poet, one Shri Sobhagbhai came to Morbi from Sayala, in 1890, to offer him the sacred "Bij-Mantra", which was given to his father by a Jain sadhu. Shri Sobhagbhai's instinct told him that Shrimad Rajchandra was worthy of receiving it.



He was astonished to hear his own name. He had not told anybody where he was going !

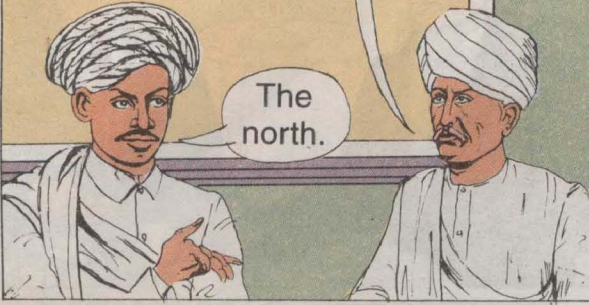


It was none other than the "Bij-Mantra".

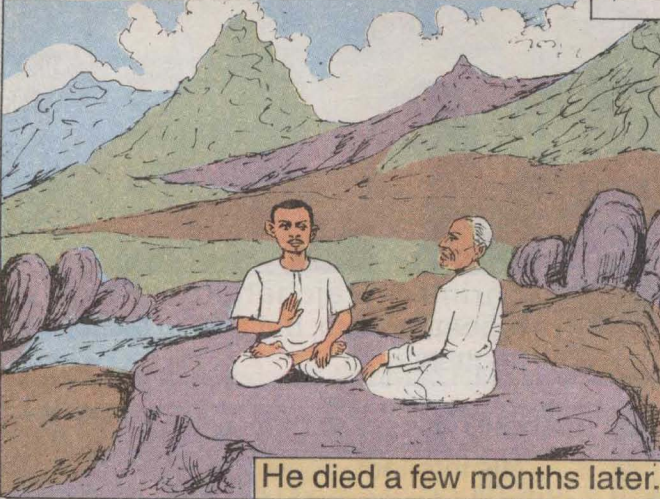
Shri Sobhagbhai was dumb-founded !
But, to test Shrimad Rajchandra more.

Which direction does my house
in Sayala face ?

The
north.

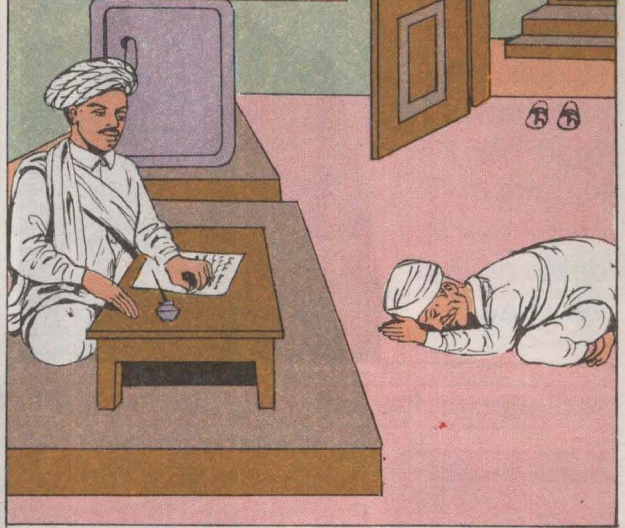


At a much later stage, assuring
Sobhagbhai's sons that nothing would
happen to him, Shrimad Rajchandra
took him to the mountains of Idar. There,
Sobhagbhai received the highest
spiritual knowledge from him.



He died a few months later.

Shri Sobhagbhai knew
he was in a divine
presence. He fell at his
feet thrice. He was 67
years old and Shrimad
Rajchandra only 23 !



Both Sobhagbhai and Juthabhai died
after attaining self-realisation due
to Shrimad Rajchandra's grace,
during his own life-time. Over and over
Shrimad Rajchandra pays lavish
tributes to the two departed souls.
The letter he wrote when Juthabhai
died is most inspiring. His letters to
Shri Sobhagbhai are an immortal
legacy to any true spiritual aspirant.

divinity in his own life-time and attained self-realisation through his grace.

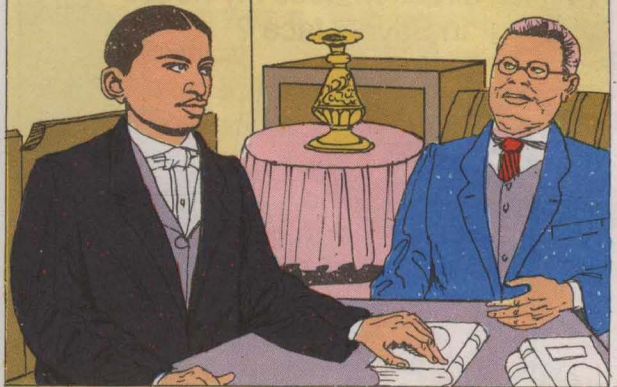
Thus, these four Bhakta-Ratnas
recognised Shrimad Rajchandra's



In 1891, young Gandhiji returned from England after completing his legal studies. He was then 23 years old. He learned of his mother's death on that very day.

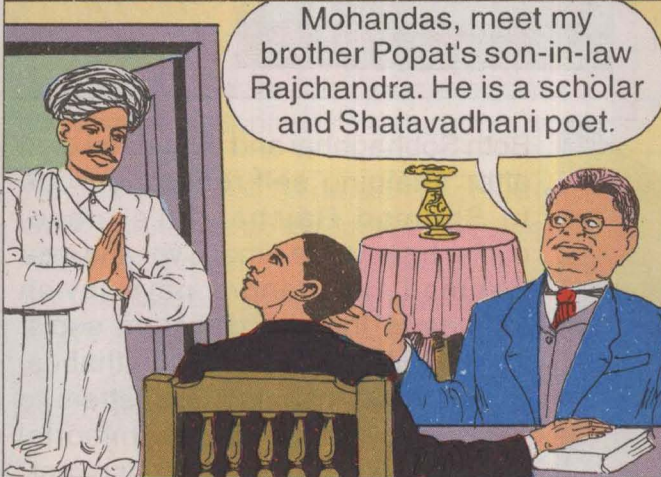


He stayed at his friend Dr. Pranjivandas' house in Bombay.



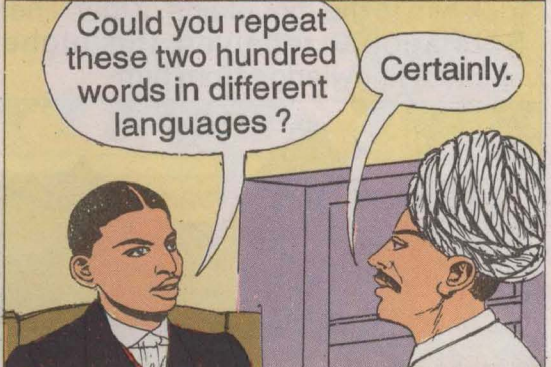
He was the brother of Shri Popatbhai, Shrimad Rajchandra's father-in-law.

At dinner, on the same day that he returned.



Mohandas, meet my brother Popat's son-in-law Rajchandra. He is a scholar and Shatavadhani poet.

Gandhiji wanted to test him.

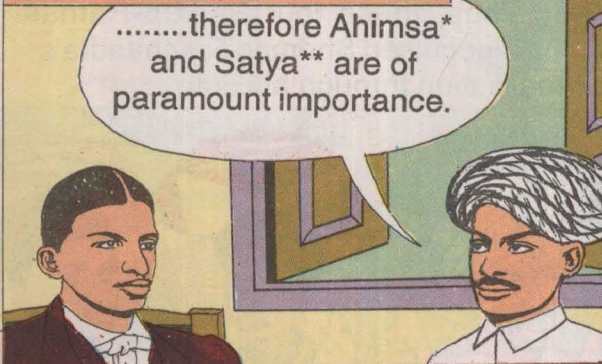


Could you repeat these two hundred words in different languages ?

Certainly.

Shrimad Rajchandra not only repeated them, but also in the exact sequence.

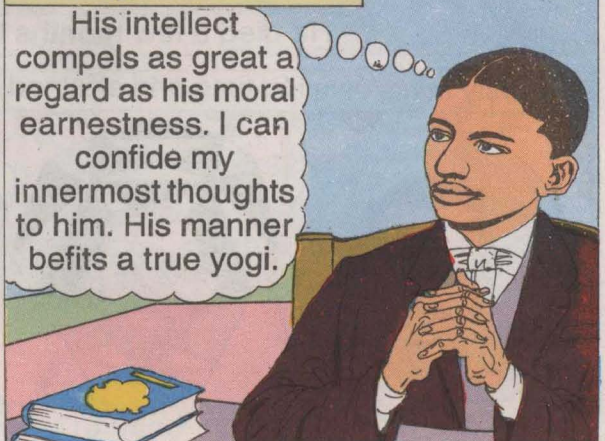
Thereafter they met regularly.



.....therefore Ahimsa* and Satya** are of paramount importance.

Shrimad Rajchandra's spiritual bent influenced Gandhiji greatly.

Gandhiji observed him.



His intellect compels as great a regard as his moral earnestness. I can confide my innermost thoughts to him. His manner befits a true yogi.

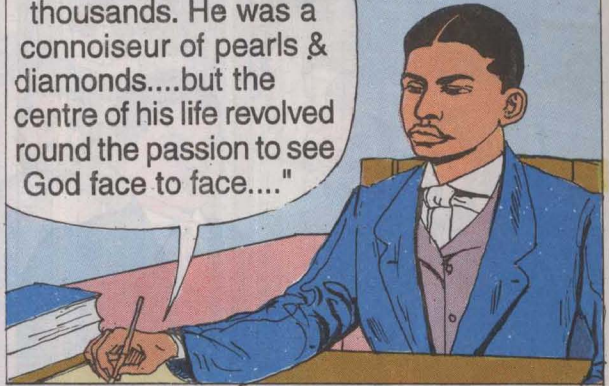
* Non-violence ** Truth

For two years their friendship deepened.

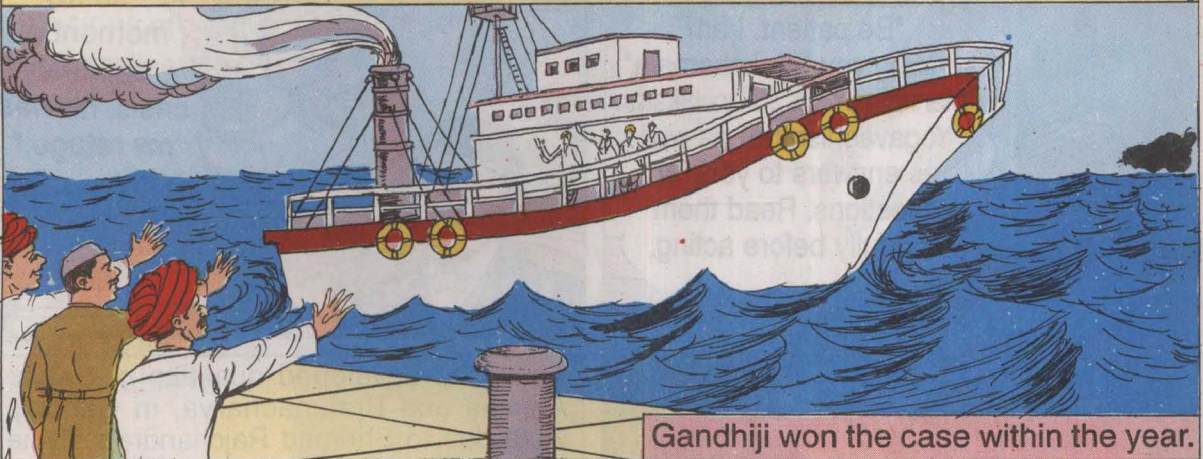


Full of admiration Gandhiji noted.

"Rajchandra's commercial transactions covered hundreds of thousands. He was a connoisseur of pearls & diamonds....but the centre of his life revolved round the passion to see God face to face...."

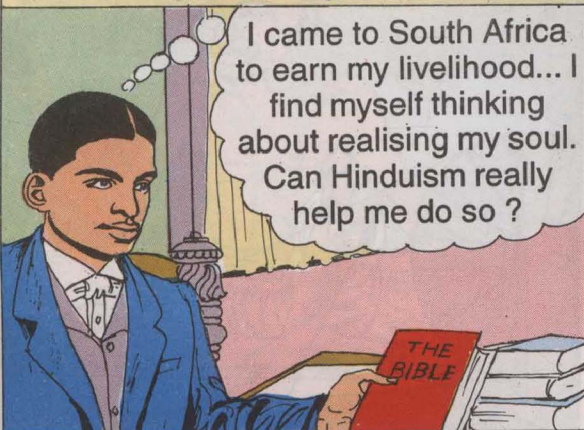


On the request of a Muslim trader Abdullah Seth, Gandhiji agreed to go to South Africa as a salaried barrister for a year to try a civil case. He sailed in 1893.



Gandhiji won the case within the year.

He corresponded with Shrimad Rajchandra regularly. At that time, Gandhiji was troubled by doubts regarding religion.



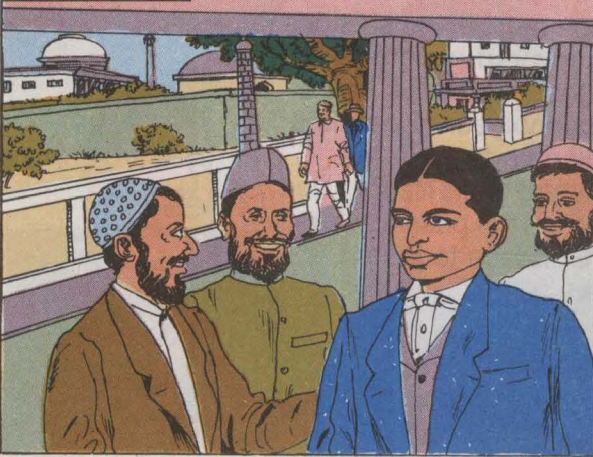
I came to South Africa to earn my livelihood... I find myself thinking about realising my soul. Can Hinduism really help me do so ?

He was attracted to Christianity.

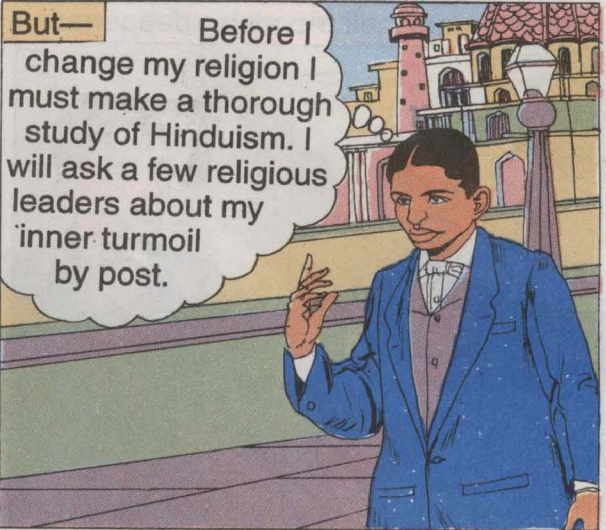
How inspiring is Christ's Sermon on the Mount !



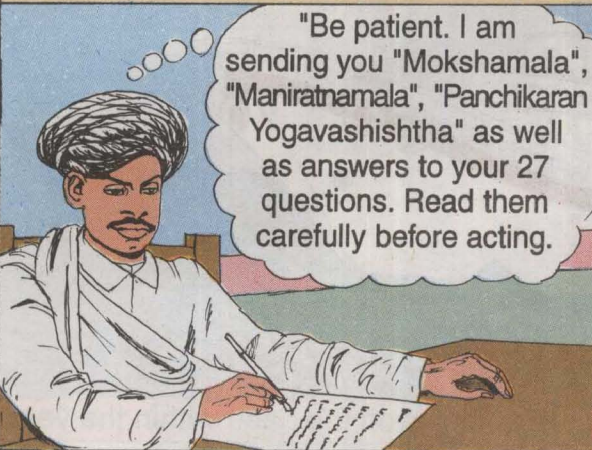
His Muslim friends were also keen to convert him.



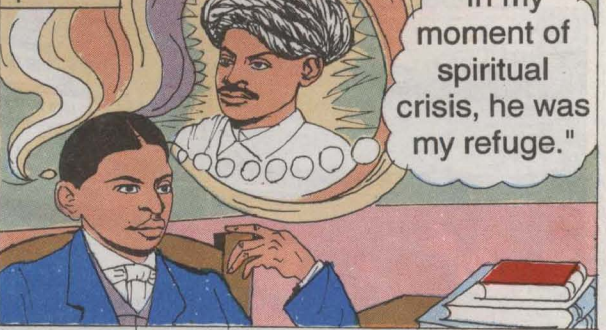
But— Before I change my religion I must make a thorough study of Hinduism. I will ask a few religious leaders about my inner turmoil by post.



Shrimad Rajchandra was the main person to whom he confided. He wrote back.

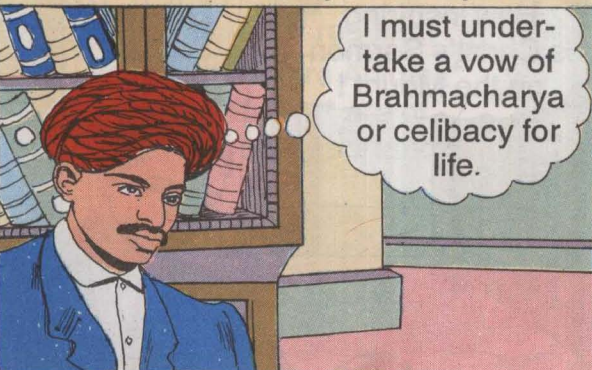


Thus Gandhiji's doubts about Hinduism were quelled.

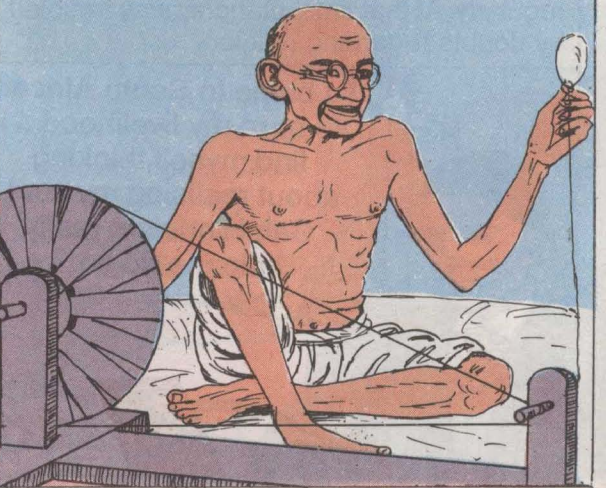


Thus, the developed qualities of Satya, Ahimsa and Brahmacharya, in Gandhiji were due to Shrimad Rajchandra's divine and intimate influence.

In 1906, when Gandhiji was only 35.

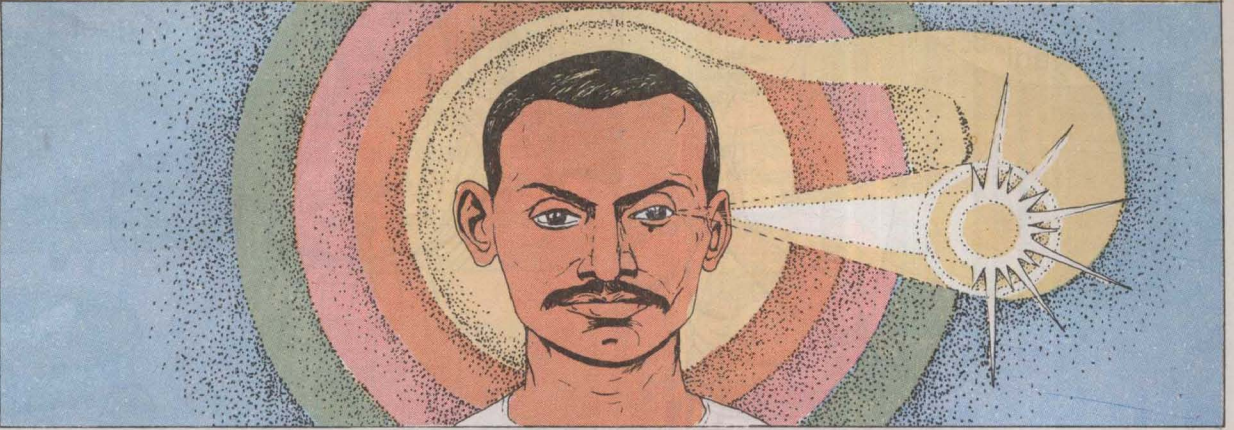


The main influence being Shrimad Rajchandra. (Gandhiji's autobiography—Part III Chapters VII & VIII)

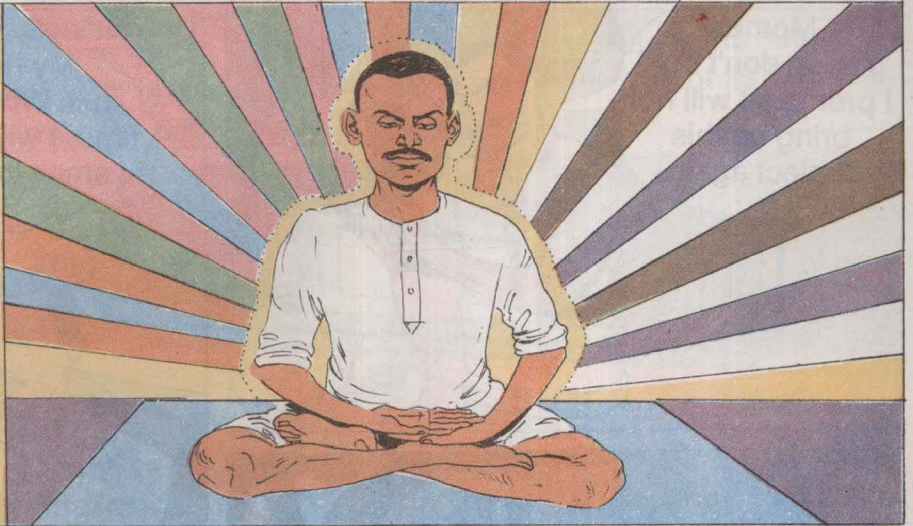


* Gandhiji's Autobiography – Part II Chapter

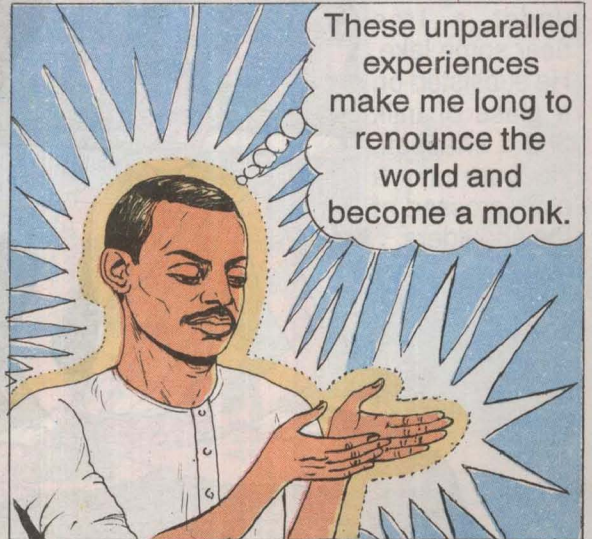
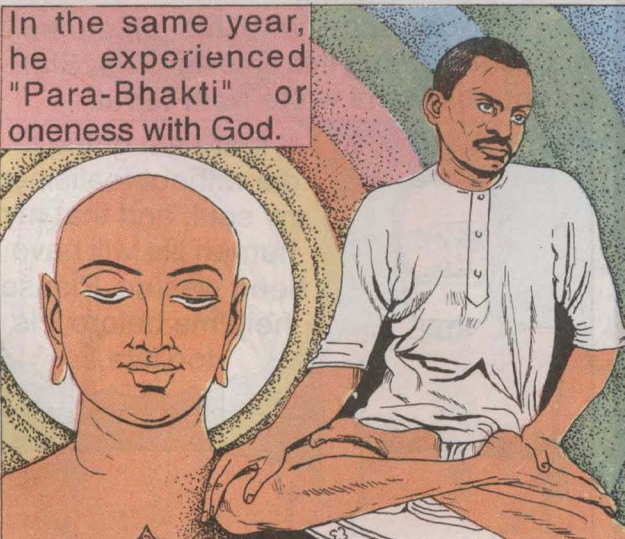
From 1886 onwards, Shrimad Rajchandra experienced extreme vairagya. He noted—"A small star of beaming, circling light emanates from left eye. It shines like lightning for five minutes and is then extinguished. There is much illumination and peace in heart and mind."

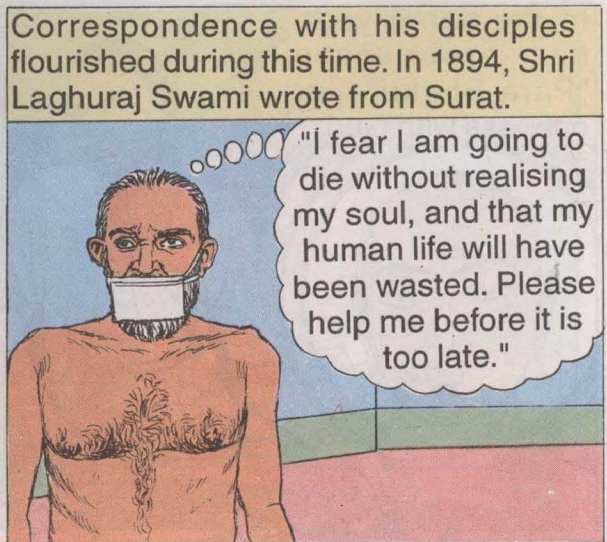
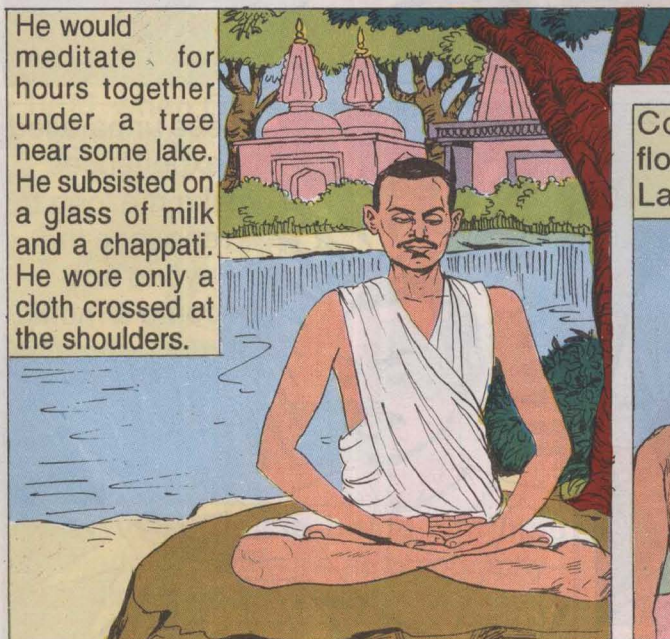
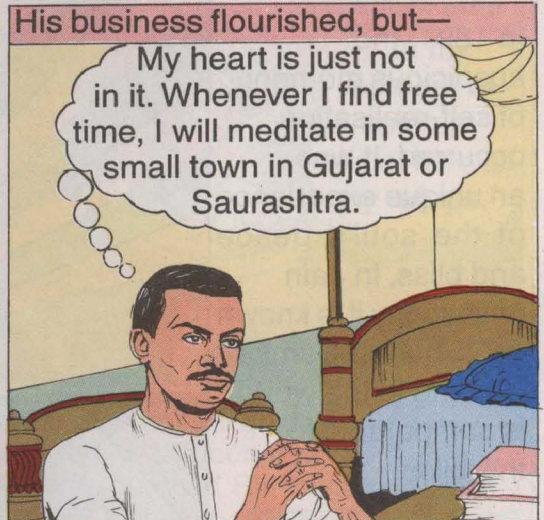
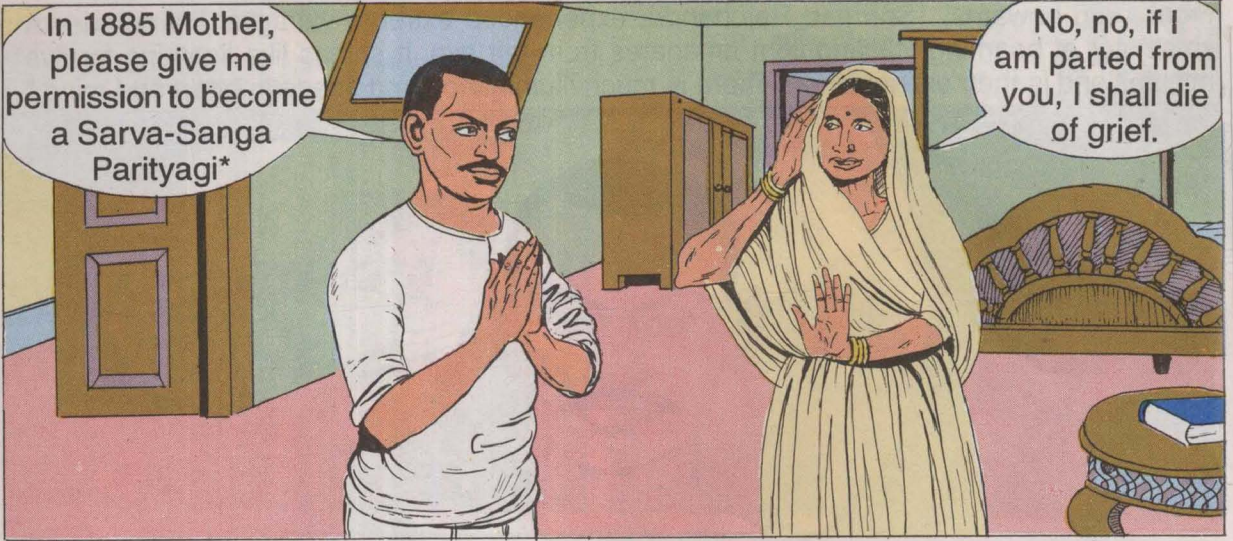


In 1891, the auspicious moment of self-realisation occurred. It was an unique experience of the soul's peace and bliss. In Jain philosophy it is known as "Shuddh-Samkit". Nothing in the world is comparable to this bliss.



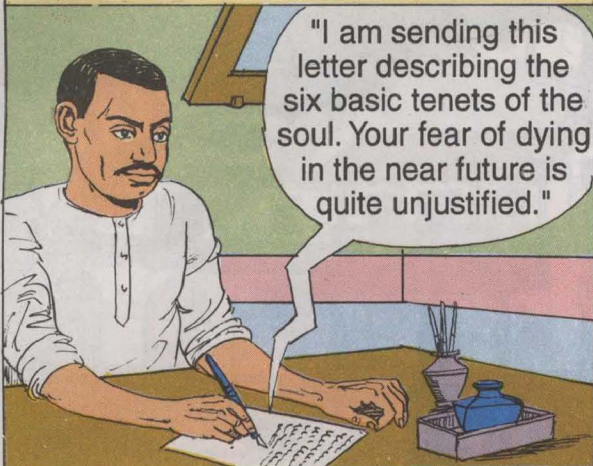
In the same year, he experienced "Para-Bhakti" or oneness with God.



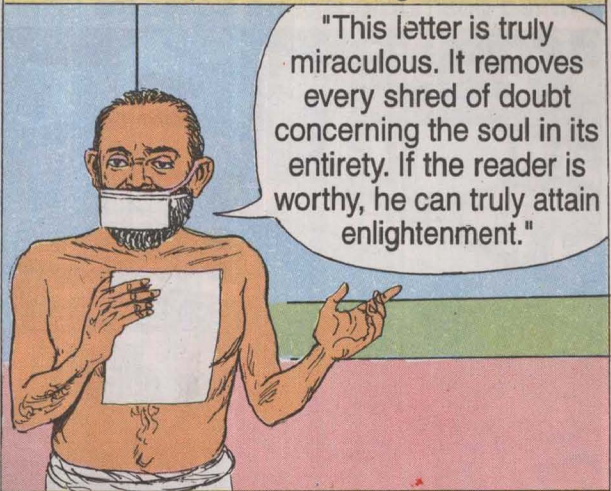


*An all renouncing monk

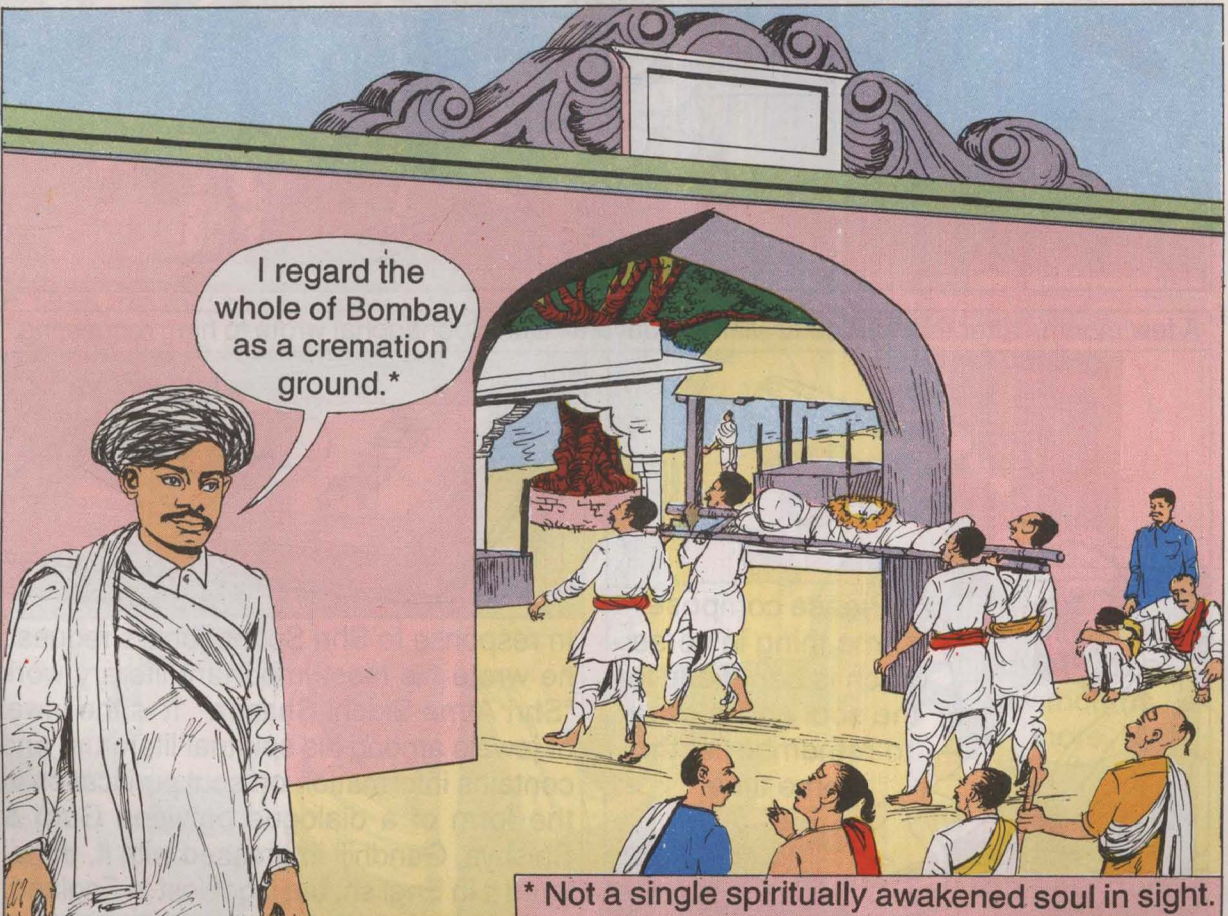
With utmost compassion, Shrimad Rajchandra sent him a letter describing the six tenets of the soul. This letter is most inspiring and is worth learning by heart.



Shri Laghuraj Swami was overwhelmed by the awe inspiring letter with its deeply underlined spiritual message.



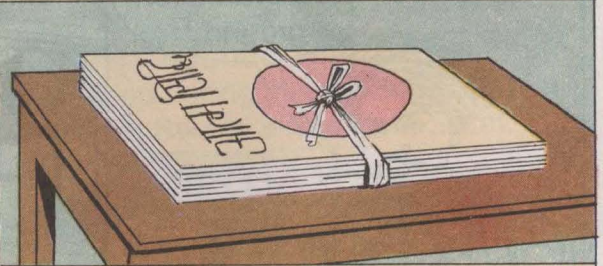
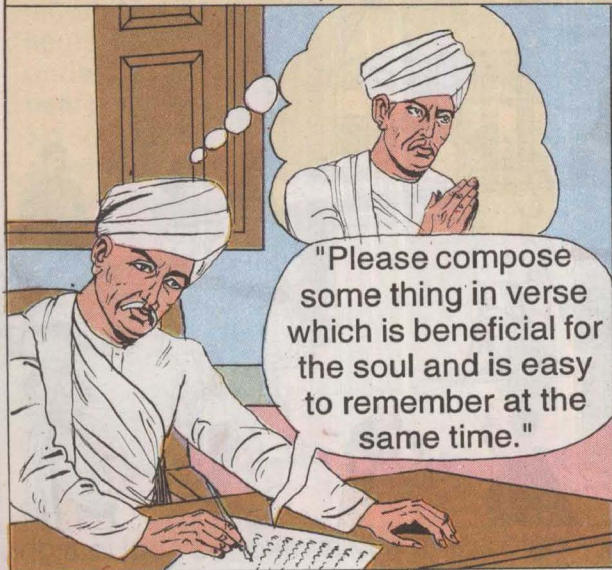
The six tenets—1. The soul exists. 2. The soul is eternal. 3. The soul is the "Doer" of its own karmas or deeds. 4. It is the enjoyer or suffered of the fruit of its karmas. 5. "Moksha" or salvation exists. 6. Means to Moksha exist.



Once on Mahavir Jayanti day in 1896, he was at his shop in Zaveri Bazaar. He saw a procession with Bhagwan Mahavir's idol on a chariot go by. Overwhelmed with emotion and compassion, he expressed his thoughts in his diary, the contents of which were printed posthumously. He signed the letter on that day as "Om Shri Mahavir" !

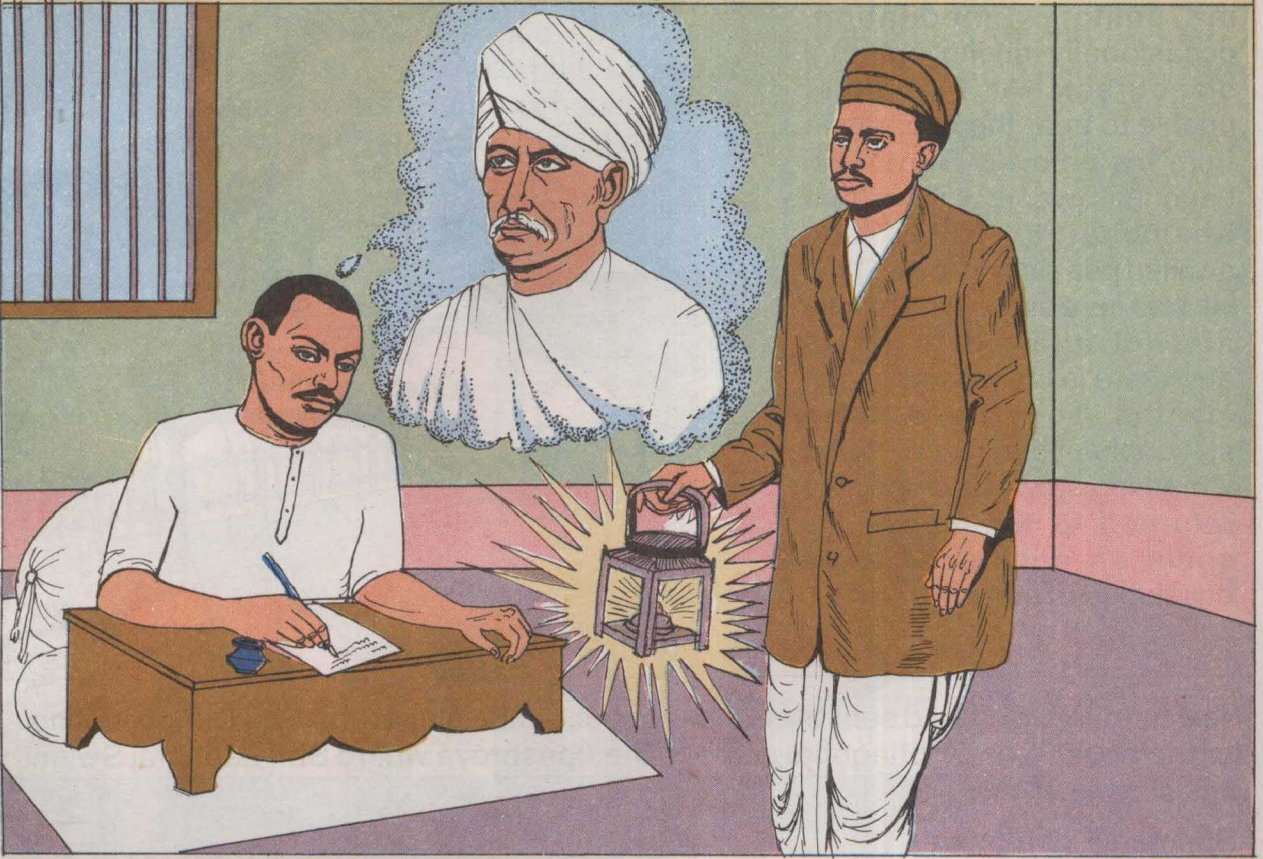


A few months after this particular Mahavir Jayanti, Shri Sobhagbhai wrote to him, requesting.



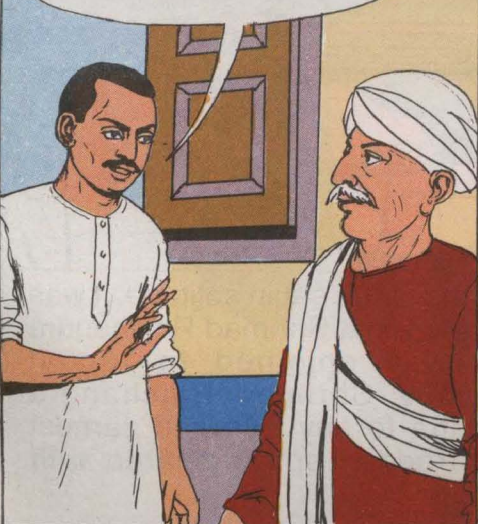
In response to Shri Sobhagbhai's request, he wrote his most important literary work "Shri Atma-Siddhi Shastra". It is the jewel of jewels among his spiritual literature and contains information on soul purification in the form of a dialogue between Guru & Shishya. Gandhiji impressed with it, translated it in English, but it got lost in England.

He was then in Nadiad. He had gone for a walk with Shri Ambalalbai. He wrote him immortal "Shri Atma-Siddhi Shashtra" having 142 two-line stanzas. At a stretch in 1½ hours in simple Gujarati for Shri Sobhagbai's benefit. Shri Ambalalbai held the lantern.* Four copies were made and given to Sobhagbai, Ambalalbai, Laghuraj Swami and Maneklalbai.



In 1896, he told his partners.

I would like to retire from active business.

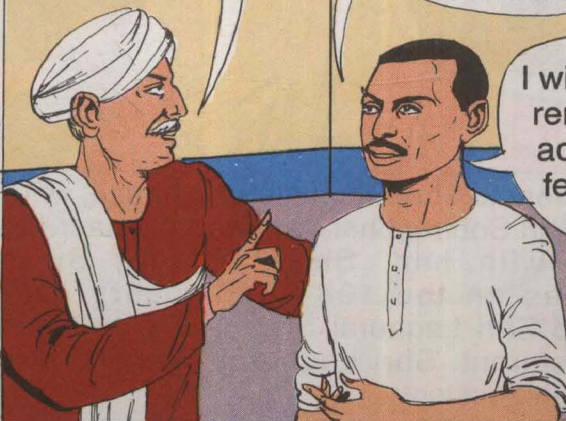


His partners tried to dissuade him, but he remained firm.

No, Rajchandra we need you. You are indispensable to us.

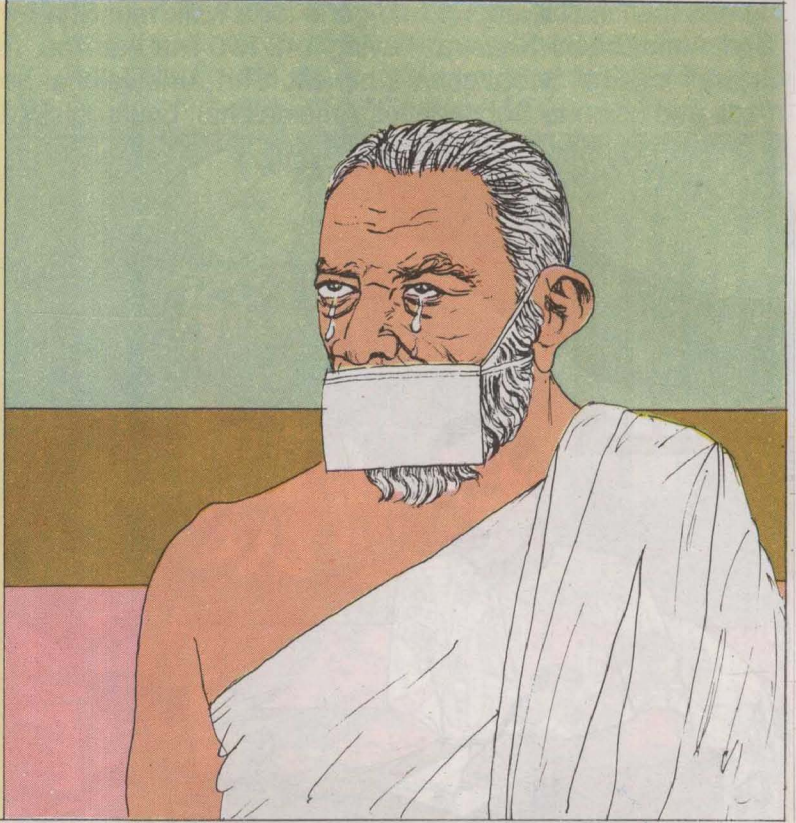
Please transfer my share of the business in my brother Mansukh's name.

I will, however, remain as an advisor for a few months more.



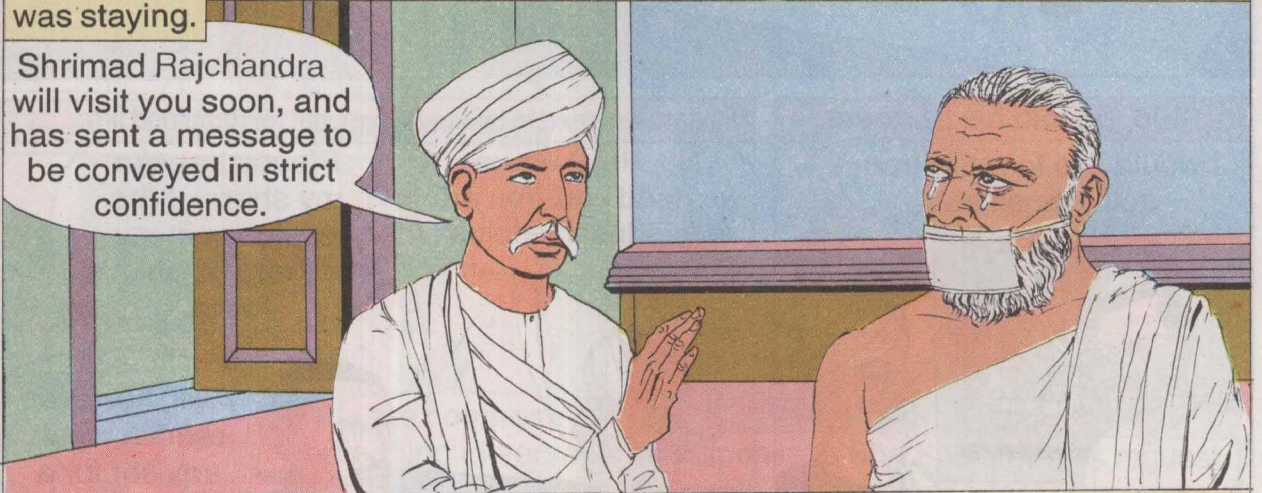
* There was no electricity in Nadiad at that time.

At Ralaj, near Khambhat, Shrimad Rajchandra was in solitary meditation, occasionally giving spiritual discourses. At that time, unable to bear the separation from his beloved Guru, Shri Laghuraj Swami, walked from Khambhat to Ralaj, and awaited permission to see him. He was sent back. (Jain monks are not allowed to travel anywhere in the four monsoon months. They have to be stationary at one place). Tears streaming down his cheeks he returned to Khambhat. He spent an anguished night enveloped in sorrow.



Next morning, Shrimad sent Shri Sobhagbhai, Ambalalbhai and Shri Dungershibhai to Khambhat. Shri Sobhagbhai came to the upashreya where Shri Laghuraj Swami was staying.

Shrimad Rajchandra will visit you soon, and has sent a message to be conveyed in strict confidence.

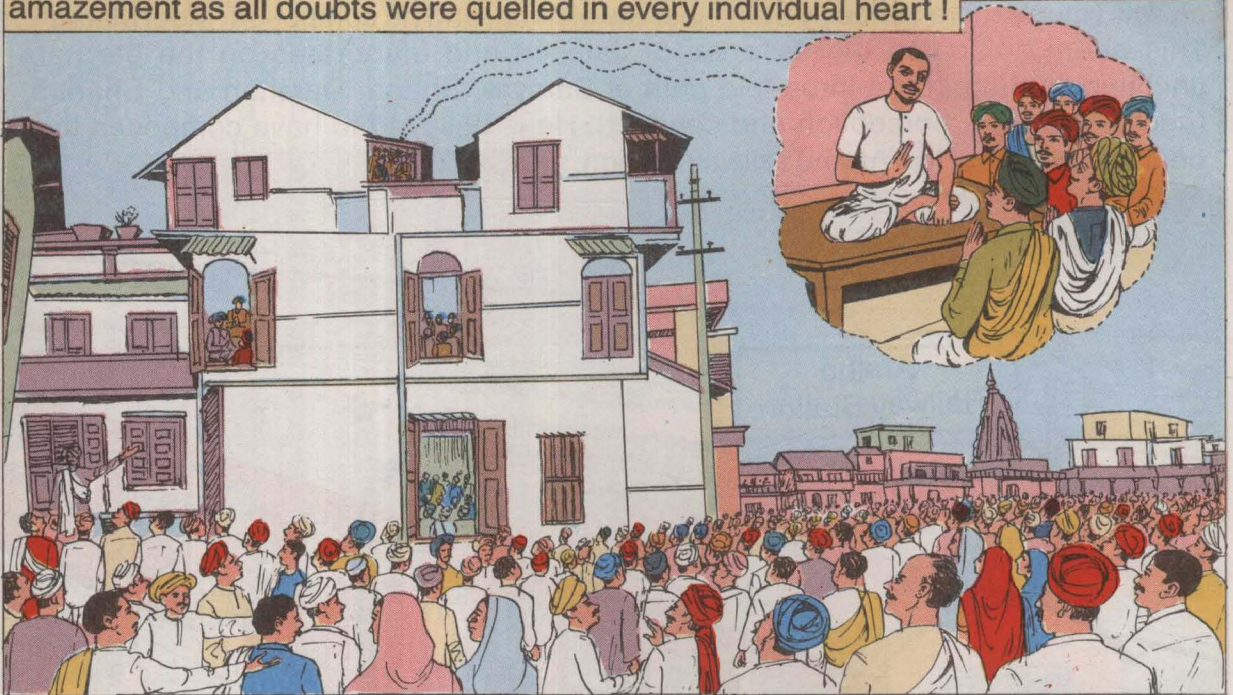


They then went to Shri Ambalalbhai's house, where they both sat in solitude. It was there that Shri Sobhagbhai delivered the sacred mantra that Shrimad Rajchandra had sent with him. Shri Laghuraj Swami was enjoined to repeat it five times on the 108 bead rosary every day. Shrimad Rajchandra empowered Shri Laghuraj Swami to give the mantra to any true and earnest spiritual aspirant. Shri Laghuraj Swami's down-trodden spirits soared with inner bliss and ecstasy.

Once, when Shrimad Rajchandra was at Anand, he saw many people going to Khambhat by train. On inquiring, he was informed that they were going to have "Darshan" of a monk, who had fasted for one month. He felt that people took outward rituals more seriously than inner awakening, and he composed "Mool Marag". This poem embodies the essence of Jainism and elaborates on the eternal, unchanging truth of the three-fold path of Samyak Gnana, Darshan and Charitra (right knowledge, perception and conduct). He is believed to have composed this beautiful poem on the Anand railway station.

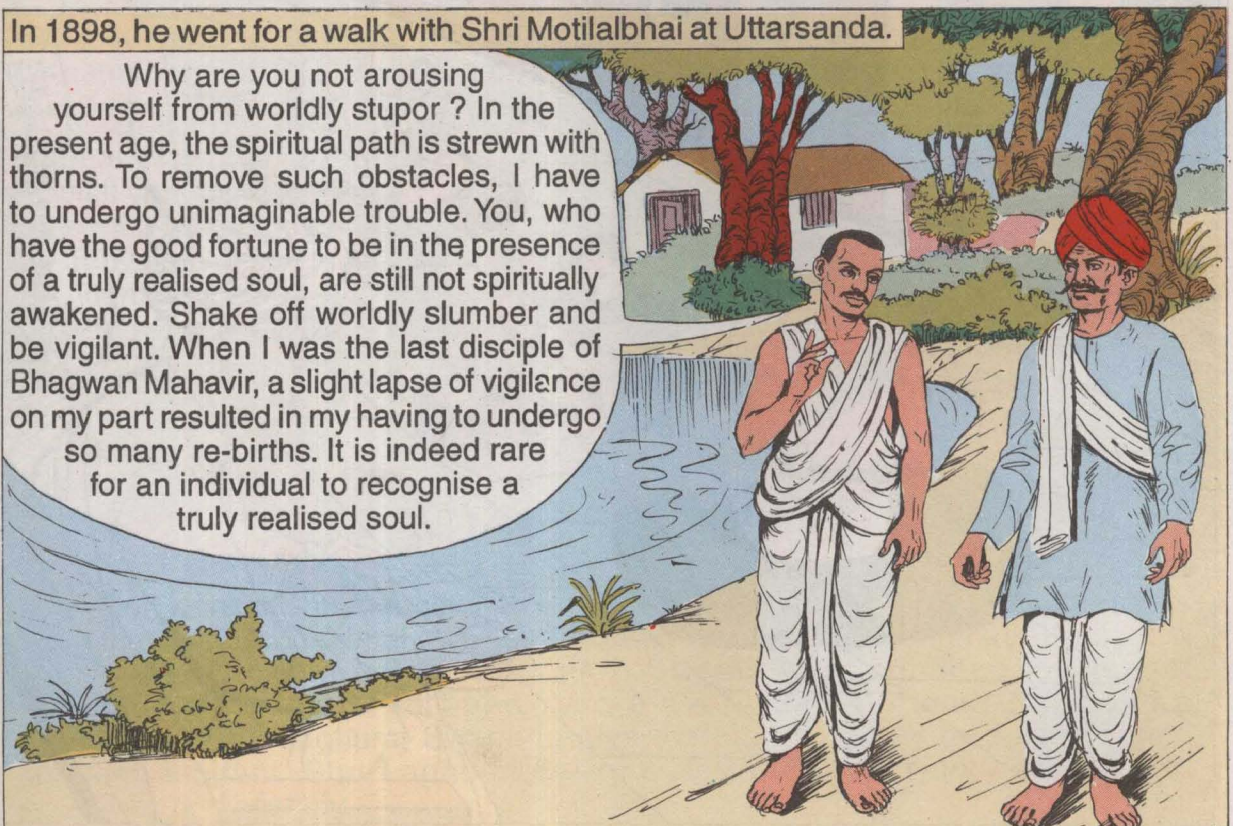


At Khambhat in 1896, Shrimad gave a sermon from the terrace of Shri Chhotalal Manekchand's house. There was no room left to even step in the house. People even spilled over on the streets to listen to him. They were spell-bound in amazement as all doubts were quelled in every individual heart !



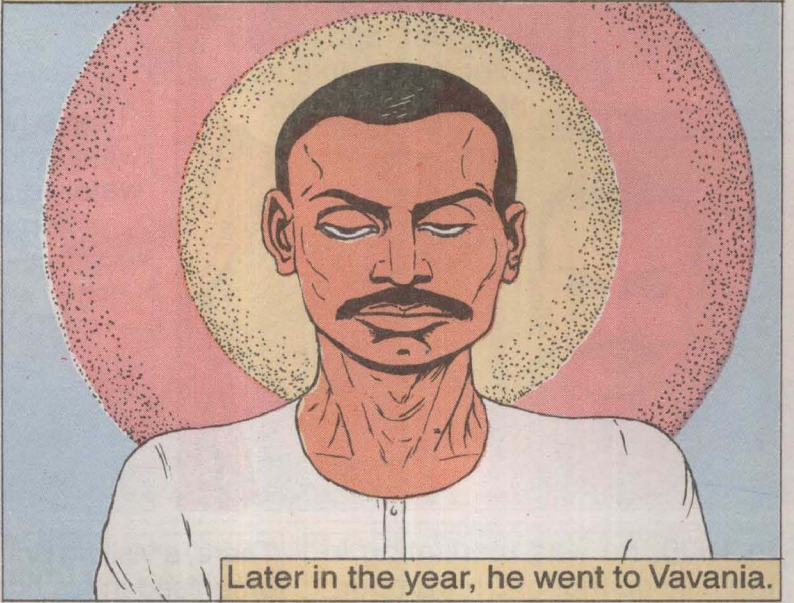
In 1898, he went for a walk with Shri Motilalbhai at Uttarsanda.

Why are you not arousing yourself from worldly stupor ? In the present age, the spiritual path is strewn with thorns. To remove such obstacles, I have to undergo unimaginable trouble. You, who have the good fortune to be in the presence of a truly realised soul, are still not spiritually awakened. Shake off worldly slumber and be vigilant. When I was the last disciple of Bhagwan Mahavir, a slight lapse of vigilance on my part resulted in my having to undergo so many re-births. It is indeed rare for an individual to recognise a truly realised soul.



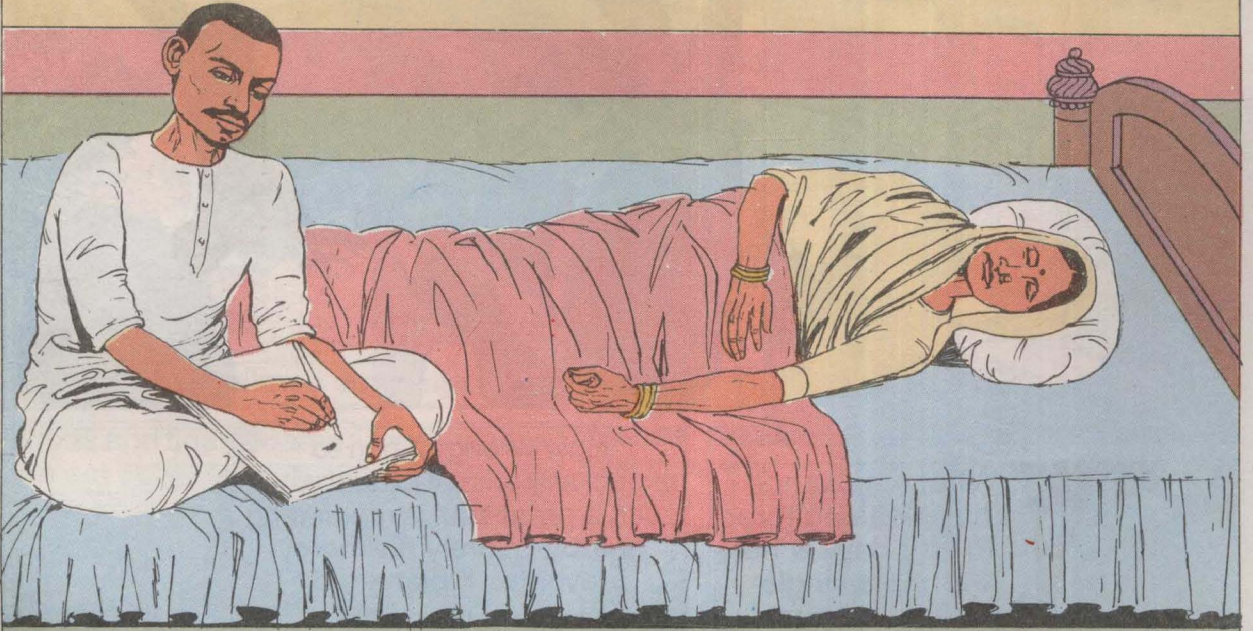
In late 1896, he composed "Dhanya Re Divas". He knew he was not far from the ultimate goal. The lyrics are stirringly beautiful and hauntingly spiritual. He is considered to be a "Kavi Chakra-Chudamani" or supreme poet according to connoisseurs of classical Gujarati literature.

From 1897, he had more free time for spiritual progress.



Later in the year, he went to Vavania.

Early one morning, he sat on the edge of his mother's cot and composed "Apoorva Avasar"* a poem with 21 stanzas.



Beside mentioning fourteen stages of spiritual development, he describes his own existing status and his intense longing for attaining the final goal. Gandhiji said of Apoorva Avasar. "The extreme vairagya which underlines every stanza, that I have experienced in every moment of my intimate association with Rajchandra."

Shrimad Rajchandra also composed Vis Dohra, Yama Niyama, Bina Nayan and other spiritual poems. He translated "Panchastikaya" by Shri Kundakundacharya and gave us an exhaustive commentary on Shri Anandaghanji's poems. Most of his writings were published posthumously.**

* Apoorva Avasar is included in Gandhiji's Ashram Bhajanavali.

** This publication is available from Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram, Agas.

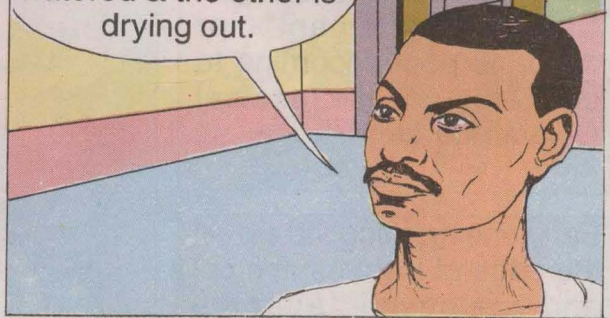
In 1899.

I have renounced all wealth, and have also undertaken a vow of celibacy for life.

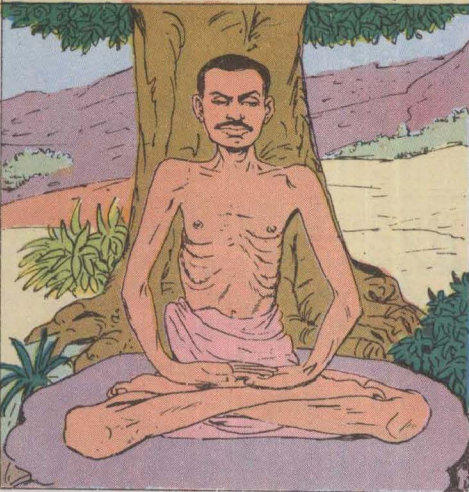


He had started to lose his health.

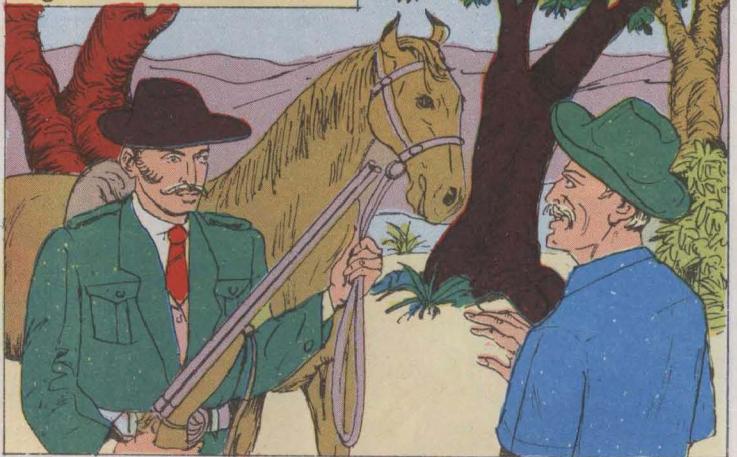
I have two gardens* within me. One is well watered & the other is drying out.



In 1900, he was meditating in the hilly district of Dharampur.

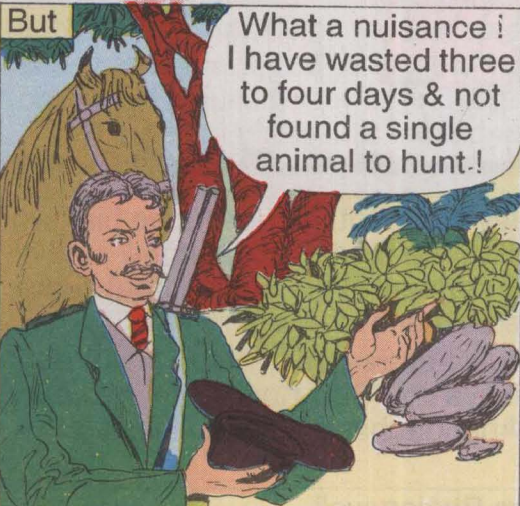


There, a visiting British bigshot was invited to a shikar organised in his honour.

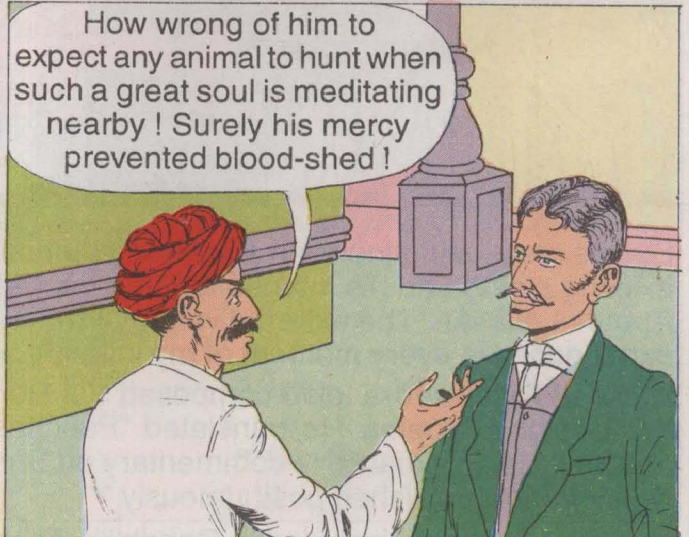


But

What a nuisance ! I have wasted three to four days & not found a single animal to hunt !

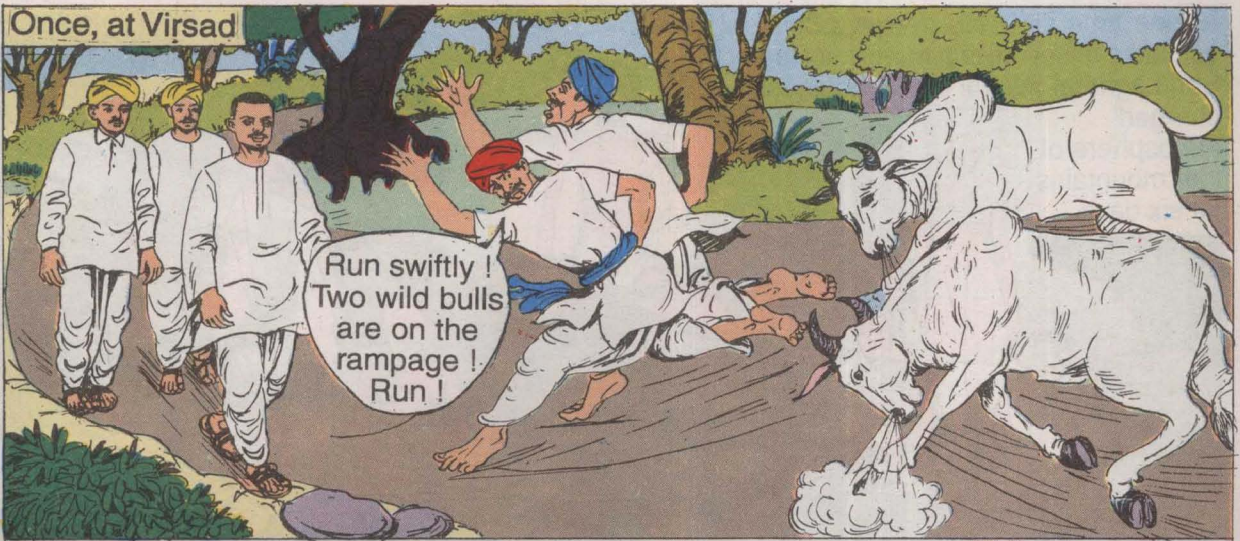


How wrong of him to expect any animal to hunt when such a great soul is meditating nearby ! Surely his mercy prevented blood-shed !

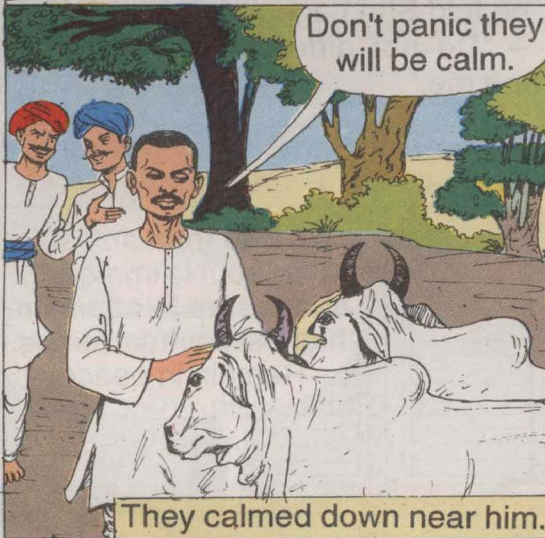


*The former—His soul. The latter—His body.

Once, at Virsad

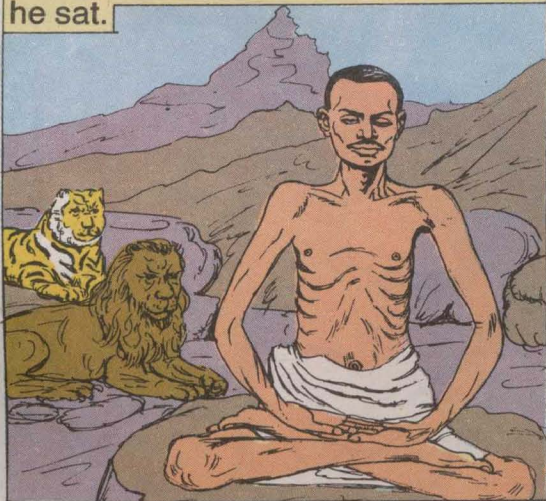


Don't panic they will be calm.

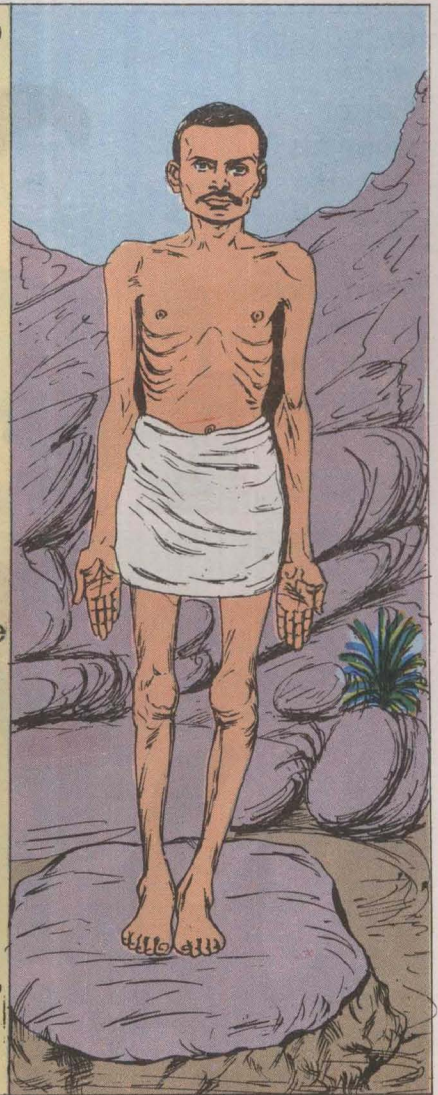


They calmed down near him.

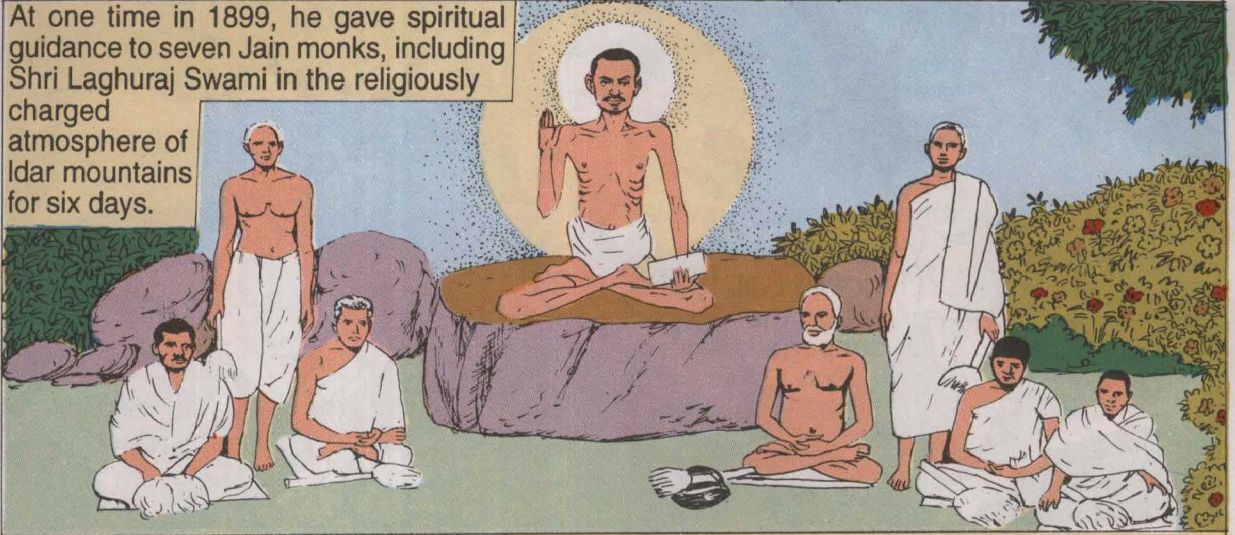
Lions and tigers roamed freely where he sat.



He often went to the sacred mountains of Idar to meditate. There Jain temples and caves where great saints meditated about conversing with the late king of Idar, Shrimad stated that he actually felt the presence of Bhagwan Shri Mahavir and his disciples who frequented these mountains more than 2,500 years ago. Shrimad was the last disciple of Bhagwan Mahavir who was born in this age. Through belief in Shrimad, many people could obtain "Moksha".



At one time in 1899, he gave spiritual guidance to seven Jain monks, including Shri Laghuraj Swami in the religiously charged atmosphere of Idar mountains for six days.



A little later, he told Shri Laghuraj Swami & Shri Devkaraji – "Do not differentiate between Veetaraja* and me."

In 1901, he was in Rajkot when his end was near. His brother mansukhbhai tended lovingly to his needs.



On the previous evening Shri Rewashankarbhai, Shri Mansukhbhai, Dr. Pranjivanbhai were present.

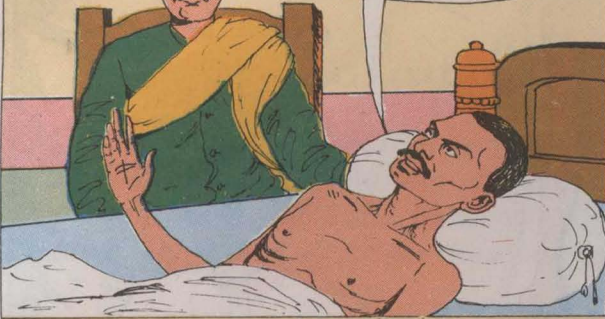
Be free from anxiety.
This soul is immortal,
and is sure to attain the
highest spiritual status.
Remain in peace.



The supreme soul who transcends all wordly desires and obtains full self-realisation.

At 7.45 next morning he drank a glass of milk. He was fully conscious.

Mansukh, please transfer me from this bed to that couch.



Mansukh managed to do so in a way, convenient for him to lie comfortably.

Mansukh, don't grieve for me. Take care of mother. I am now going into Mahasamadhi.

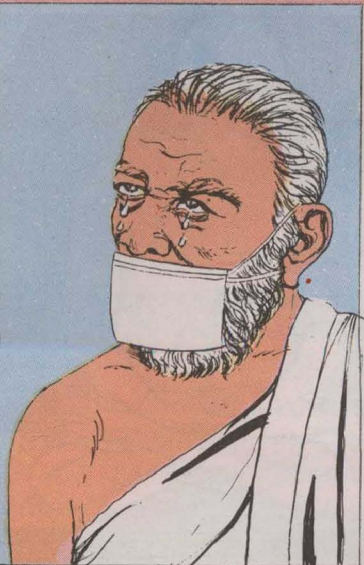


During his Mahasamadhi which lasted five hours there was a divine lustre on his face.

He was thirty three and a half years old. The mortal body was discarded by his immortal soul on 9th April 1901.

News of his Mahasamadhi shattered Shri Laghuraj Swami as well as Shri Ambalalbhai.

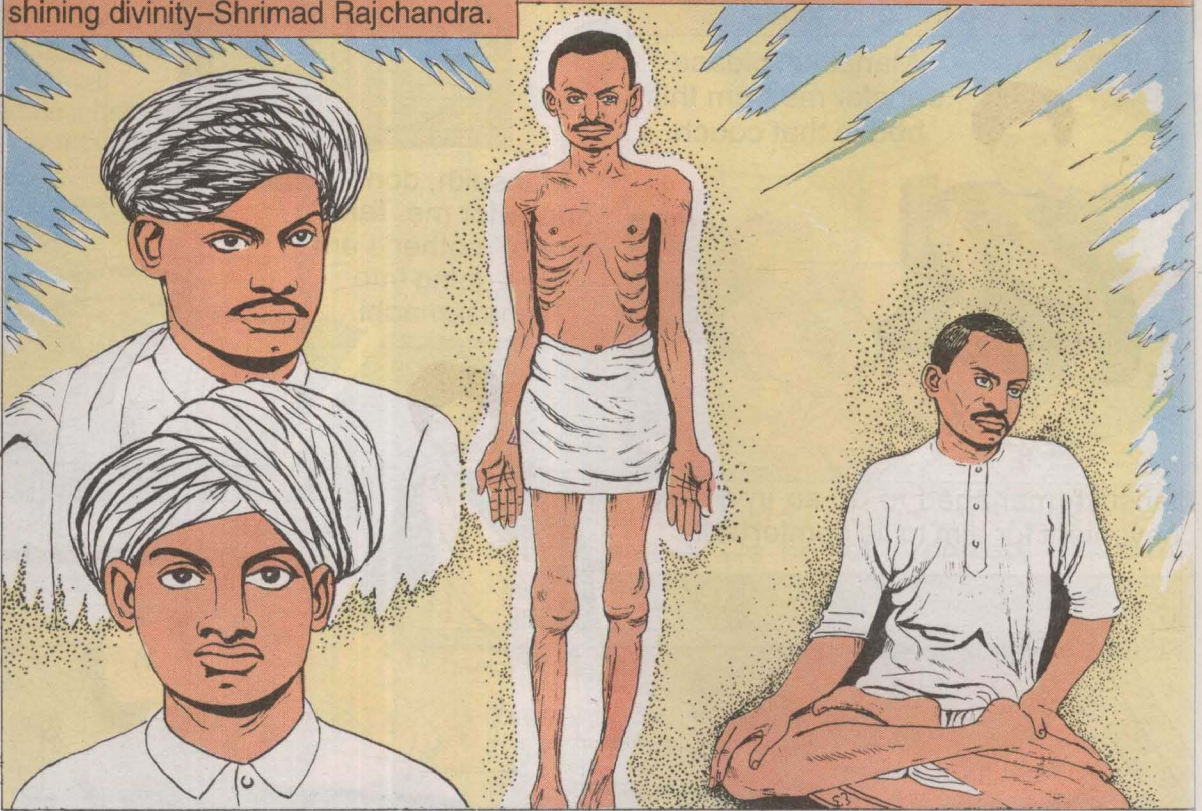
He was in Kavitha about to break his fast from the previous day. When he heard the sad news, he went back to the forest without touching any food or water and fasted for the next day as well.



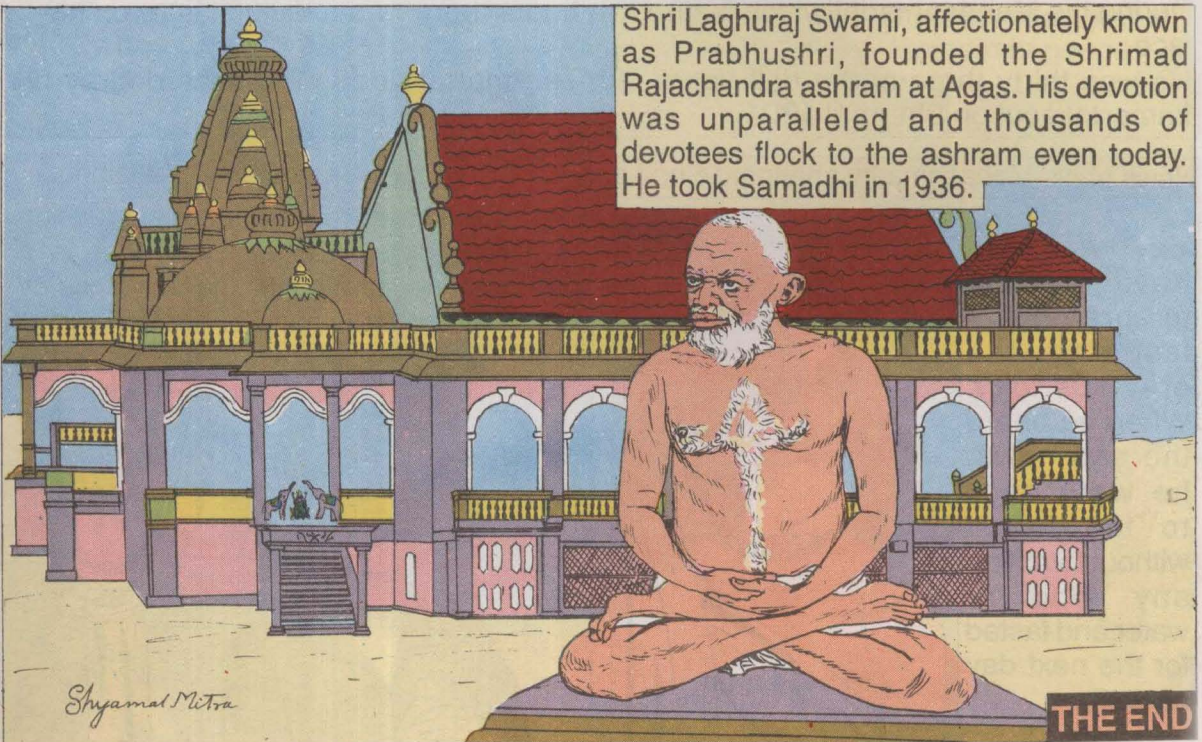
He wrote a heart-rending letter expressing his deep sorrow and sense of loss in a poetic manner bemoaning the lack of mercy shown by the cruel hand of death.



Thus ended the life of a true Gnani and Atmadarshi whose soul is immortal—a brilliantly shining divinity—Shrimad Rajchandra.



Shri Laghuraj Swami, affectionately known as Prabhushri, founded the Shrimad Rajachandra ashram at Agas. His devotion was unparalleled and thousands of devotees flock to the ashram even today. He took Samadhi in 1936.



THE END



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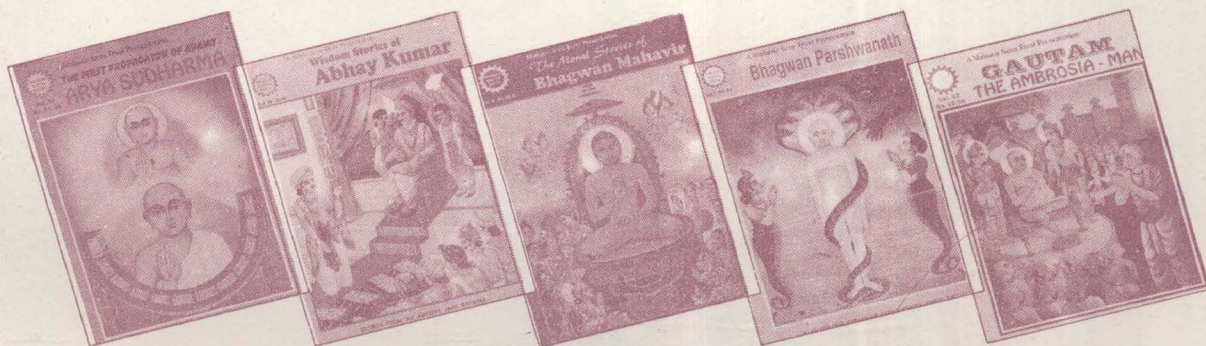
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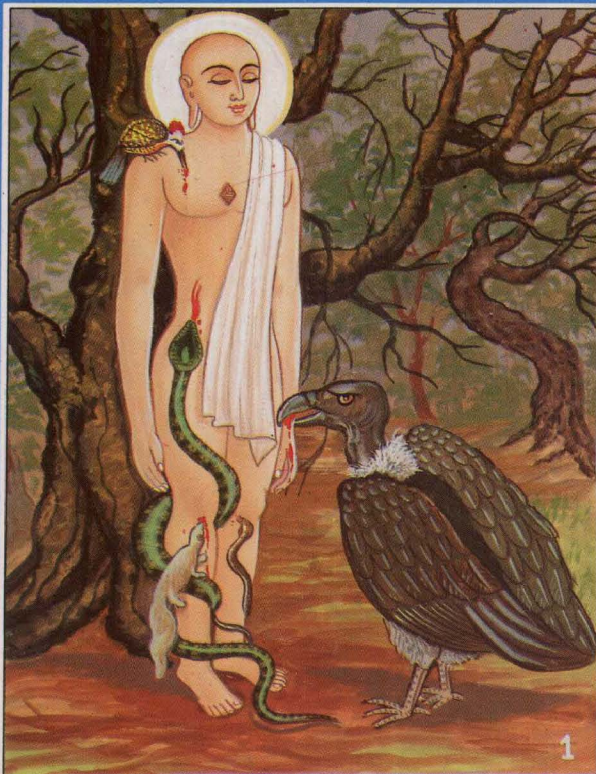
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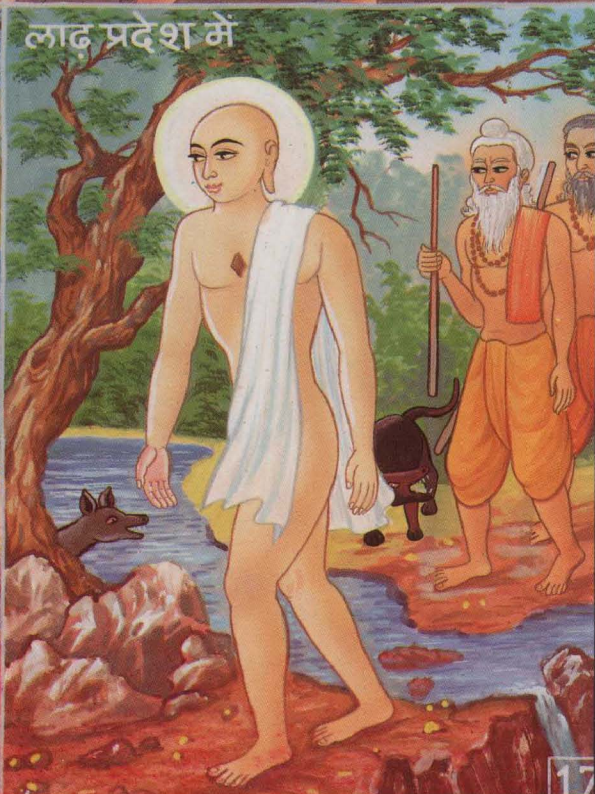
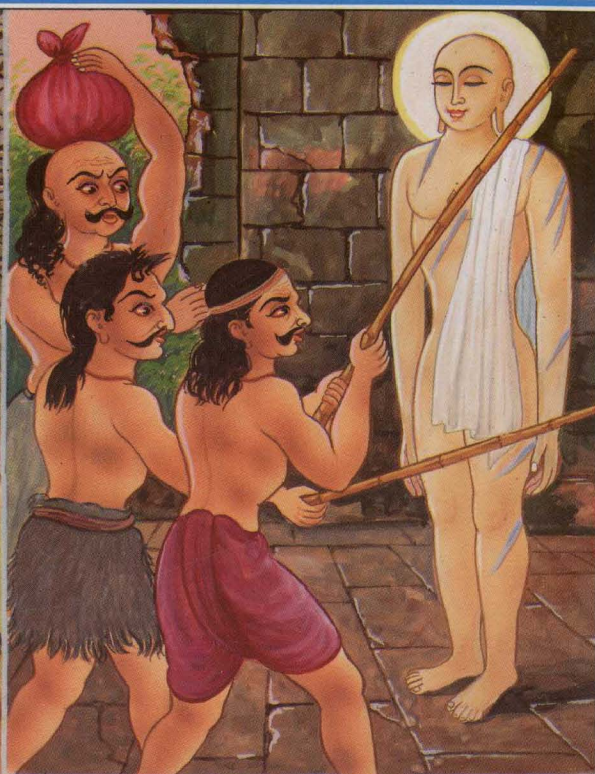
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